DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 116 501 CS 202 740

AUTHOR	Richmond, Farley, Ed.
TITLE	Theatre in India.
INSTITUTION	Michigan State Univ., East Lansing. Asian Studies Center.
PUB DATE	75
NOTE	377p.
JOURNAL CIT	Journal of South Asian Literature; v10 n2,3,4 Entire Issue Winter, Spring, Summer, 1975
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Annotated Bibliographies; *Asian Studies; *Drama; *Indians; Literary Criticism; *Literature; Literature Appreciation; *Theater Arts
IDENTIFIERS	*South Asian Literature

ABSTRACT

The articles in this volume place special emphasis on significant forms of traditional Indian theatre about which relatively little has been written. They represent, for the most part, the work of relatively young and unknown scholars on the threshold of their careers. Each article was selected for inclusion either because it probed deeply into the composition of a unique theatre form, or because it was innovative and shed light on relatively obscure material or it viewed old data from an entirely different perspective. Several representative Indian plays are included which demonstrate that traditional Indian plays are inseparable from the manner in which they are produced. Consequently, the reader must have at least a superficial knowledge of the theatre form before the merits of the play can be fully appreciated. An annotated bibliography which lists materials primarily in English on Indian drama and theatre is also included. (LL)

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US ISSN 0025-0503

ED126501

Journal of South Asian Literature

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Asian Studies Center
Michigan State University

CS 202 740

JOURNAL OF SOUTH ASIAN LITERATURE

(formerly MAHFIL)

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Subscription Rates:

U.S. Individuals	$6.00
U.S. Institutions	$7.00
Out-of-the Country	$8.00

Subscriptions and communications relating to subscriptions should be addressed to:

JOURNAL OF SOUTH ASIAN LITERATURE
Asian Studies Center
Center for International Programs
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48824

Prices:

Single issues — $1.75
Double issues — $3.50

Manuscripts:

All manuscripts and books for review should be sent to the editors at:

JOURNAL OF SOUTH ASIAN LITERATURE
Box 39, Foster Hall
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois 60637

The JOURNAL OF SOUTH ASIAN LITERATURE is published quarterly by the Asian Studies Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our sincere appreciation goes out to Jeanne Treadwell, Printing Coordinator, for her patience and cooperation in the production of the *Journal of South Asian Literature*. Without Jean's dedication to quality workmanship, it would be literally impossible to complete the *Journal* in the allotted time available. A special thanks is in order, since this issue of the *Journal* was extremely lengthy and complicated.

Once again, we would like to acknowledge and thank Jean for her good naturedness and cooperation in the production of the Center's publications.

ASIAN STUDIES
CENTER
1975

SILVESTRUM TENUI MUSAM MEDITARIS AVENA: Vergil

JOURNAL OF SOUTH ASIAN LITERATURE

Volume X Winter, Spring, Summer 1975 Numbers 2, 3, 4

THEATRE IN INDIA

Guest Editor: Farley Richmond

Contents

PREFACE i

TOLU BOMMALU KATTU: SHADOW THEATRE IN ANDHRA PRADESH . . . . Neils Roed Sorensen 1

THE BRAJ RĀS LĪLĀ . . . . Darius Swann 21

KALIDASA'S PLAYS: RITUALS OF HUMAN PERFECTION . . . . Sri Ram V. Bakshi 45

VANIO AND *ZANDA ZULAN* (TWO FOLK PLAYS) . . . . Asaita Thakar 51

JATRA: THE POPULAR TRADITIONAL THEATRE OF BENGAL . . . . Pabitra Sarkar 87

HITLER (A MODERN JATRA) . . . . Sambhu Bag 109

AIDS TO THE APPRECIATION OF KATHAKALI . . . . L. S. Rajagopalan and V. Subramanya Iyer 205

NAḶA CARITAM ĀṬṬAKATHA (A KATHAKALI PLAY) . . . . Unnayi Varyyar 211

THE RITUALS OF YAKṢAGĀNA BAḌAGATIṬṬU BAYALĀṬA . . . . Martha Bush Ashton 249

KṚṢṆANĀṬṬAM: A TRADITIONAL DANCE-DRAMA CONCERNING THE LIFE OF LORD KṚṢṆA . . . . Edwinia Ranganathan 275

JSAL INTERVIEWS EBRAHIM ALKAZI 289

INDIAN THEATRE MATERIALS . . . . Farley Richmond 327

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS 377

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US ISSN 0025-0503

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PREFACE

Aside from attempting to fulfill the general goals of *Journal of South Asian Literature*, this volume represents a concerted effort to expose the readers to the research of relatively young and unknown scholars on the threshold of their careers. Most of the articles have never appeared in print. The few that have, unfortunately have not enjoyed wide circulation in the United States.

Special emphasis is placed on significant forms of traditional Indian theatre about which relatively little has been written. Each article was selected to be included for one of several reasons: either because it probes deeply into the composition of a unique theatre form, or it breaks new ground, shedding light on relatively obscure material, or it views old data from an entirely different perspective. To illustrate the richness of India's dramatic literature several representative plays are included. The examples demonstrate the obvious -- that traditional Indian plays are inseparable from the manner in which they are produced and, consequently, the reader must have at least a superficial knowledge of the theatre form before the merits of the play can be fully appreciated.

Obviously much more could have been included. Given sufficient space, time and financial resources, one hopes that future issues of *JSAL* will be devoted to other aspects of this fascinating and vast topic.

Bombay
9 August 1974

Niels Roed Sorensen

TOLU BOMMALU KATTU:
SHADOW THEATER RE: ANDHRA PRADESH

Introduction

Shadow theater may be conceived as a special form of drama requiring a semi-transparent screen, a light source, and cut-out figures placed between these. The spectators on the other side of the screen see shadows of the figures only, but neither the manipulator nor his shadow.[1] Shadow theater is thus a two-dimensional art-form -- a precursor of both film and television. It also falls into the category of marionette theater, where cut-out figures or dolls are manipulated with the aid of strings or rods or both.

The German scholars G. Jacob and R. Pischel believe that the shadow play in Asia is at least as old, if not older, than the earliest attempts at dramatic representation with the aid of actors and that, like drama, it has its origin in ritual.[2] The religious significance is manifest today in all the Indian forms and in the Indonesian form Wayang Kulit, where, for instance, a prologue can express veneration of the dead. In Asia, the original form of shadow play is found in China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia and India, and there are vestiges in the Near East.

Jacob and Pischel have cast light on the history of the shadow play in India and believe that it originated there, while other scholars maintain that China was its home. The play has persisted, more or less intact, in the following Indian states: Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Madras, Mysore and Kerala -- by and large, all the South Indian states; whereas there are no traces in Northern India or Ceylon. There are no extant literary sources to date it, but according to oral tradition it was found in Andhra Pradesh as early as 200 B.C. when it was patronized by the Satavahana dynasty. Shadow theater was also under the patronage of the Pallava dynasty, and of the Chalukya dynasty, which established itself in the present-day state of Mysore. It is held that the shadow play flourished for the last time in Andhra Pradesh under the princes who ruled Vijayanagar from the fourteenth century, and especially under King Kona Reddy (sixteenth century), in whose reign the Telugu manuscript *Ramayana ranganathana* was composed specially for the shadow play.[3] The art had by then become the province of a special class, in which musicians, dancers, painters and stagehands had organized themselves into troupes of shadow players.

According to tradition, the original Andhra Pradesh shadow dolls were simple, opaque figures, some of which had joints connected to strings. These were called *keelu bomma* in Telugu, "dolls which can be moved." At the next stage, figures of translucent hide, painted and decorated, began to be used. These figures are called *tolu bommalu kattu*, "dolls made of leather," the term which is used today.

In Sanskrit, the term *chaya nataka* is found, meaning "shadow drama," or "shadow play," but it also refers to a collection of dramas, among which is the famous *Dutangada* written by Subhata in the thirteenth century A.D. It is not clear, however, whether the term means a shadow play as such,[4] and since shadow theater as a drama form was not discussed in the ancient Indian treatise on drama, music and dancing, *Natya sastra*, it is not possible to ascertain when it was accorded the status of "classical" drama. It was late to achieve literary form in *Chaya nataka*, and there is no account of the realization of these plays.

Puppet-Making

The hide of deer, buffalo and goat is used for constructing the puppets, goatskin being the most common material. There is said to be a relation between the kind of skin used and the person represented in the figure: deerskin, which is difficult to obtain, is used for gods and heroes, and goatskin for saints and ordinary people, while demons are made from buffalo skin. This allocation of leather is practiced in the area around Circars.[5]

With respect to size, too, there are different traditions in the various districts. In the Nellore district, which I visited, the average size of the dolls is about 1.5 m. (meter = 39.37 inches), and in the Telangana district 1.2 m., whereas around Circars it is not unusual to find dolls approaching 2 m.

One sometimes sees the same person represented by dolls of varying size. Thus in performances in the Nellore district four figures of the monkey god Hanuman are used: besides the ordinary 1.5 m. tall figure, a giant Hanuman battles with the demon army, a miniature Hanuman conceals himself in Sita's garden in Lanka (Ceylon) and another smaller Hanuman figure makes the bold jump across the strait separating Ceylon and India. Naturally, the little figure dashing across the big, empty screen creates a special effect emphasizing not only the monkey god's bravery, but his isolation and perilous situation. In the same performance, the demon king, Ravana, is represented by several figures to fit the situation. For the large shadow play figures it is necessary to use more than one piece of leather.

The manufacture of leather puppets, from the tanning of the hides to the cutting and decoration of the figures, is a part of the puppeteer's trade. As the demand for shadow plays is in sharp decline, however, it is rarely necessary to cut new dolls. The troupe I visited in the Nellore district had only a few pieces of leather, from which a little Hanuman figure was made for me. If I had ordered larger dolls, it would have taken a month or so to obtain the hide and pigment, whereas all the necessary tools were already in the possession of the puppeteers.

The prepared hide ready to receive the outline of the puppet is parchment-like, almost transparent, the color of light amber and with a smooth surface.

Earlier, too, it seems to have been difficult to obtain skin for leather dolls. A deerskin may have a value of a hundred rupees or more, a considerable amount for a puppeteer. It is related that earlier, when shadow play performances were deemed a necessity of life and had great religious and ritual significance, rich villagers presented hides to the puppeteer, the name of the donor being cut into the finished figure.

In Andhra Pradesh are found the world's largest, and most mobile, shadow marionettes. In order to achieve this characteristic mobility, the various parts of the body are cut out separately. The leather is spread out on a wooden board and with very simple metal points the outline of the figure marked. With a firm hand, the leader of the troupe, the *sutradhar*,[6] draws in the contours of the doll without a template or pattern, as though his memory is peopled with shadow pictures merely waiting to be realized on the outstretched leather. He and his helpers need only five or six different tools: markers, scissors, punch and knives. For most figures, the trunk and head are cut in one piece, and the hands, upper arms, lower arms, feet, upper legs and lower legs separately.

The head and neck of important persons are a separate unit, being connected in a simple but effective way to the body to give extra mobility. This neck articulation is peculiar to the Andhra Pradesh shadow puppets. It confers life and elegance on the play and is employed to great effect in battle scenes or dance, where the puppeteer can, instead of turning the whole figure, merely turn the head, a deception which is accepted, indeed hardly noticed. A skillful manipulator gives the impression of figures constantly twisting and turning, whereas, in fact, the only movement is at the neck. The same deception, which often causes the faces to be cut in profile, is practiced in the neighboring state of Mysore. The middle one of Ravana's ten heads is seen frontally, while the other nine are seen more and more in profile until the profile effect is complete.

The contours, and especially physiognomy, are an expression of the character of the doll. Body build and attitude, details of costume, and headdress and other ornaments indicate who is being portrayed, and the ability to characterize with the aid of a scorer and knife is a measure of the skill of the village artists. Heroes are furnished with oblong almond-shaped eyes, noble brows, straight noses and thin lips, whereas demons have protruding eyes, thick noses and lips, mouths full of long sharp teeth, and massive, cumbersome and aggressive bodies. Spiritual and physical power, refinement and vulgarity are contrasted in a simple but sophisticated manner.

The ritual element, which underlies all Indian theatrical tradition, extends to the decoration and cutting of the puppets. The features around the eyes, nose and mouth are the last to be cut, and since this completion will call the puppet to life, it is not effected until the puppet is to be used for the first time in a performance, so that it can be animated in the right manner.

In Andhra Pradesh, a few leather puppets are used where the body is in one piece, or where only a hand or arm can be moved. In these "stills" the artists give full rein to their imagination: composition and decoration are more important than mobility, and the character of the person portrayed is expressed not only in build, but in the pictorial elements cut into the surface such as branches, vines, birds and flowers. In the Nellore plays, a leather still of this kind was used for Sita in her imprisonment in Ceylon. She is sitting as in an arbor, almost concealed in foliage; a bird has settled between the leaves and is her only companion. She stretches her hand out (her arm can be moved by means of a string) and gives Hanuman a piece of jewelry to take to her beloved Rama.

Stylization and Characterization

As in related forms of original Indian theater, the shadow puppets represent mythological figures -- gods, demons and legendary heroes -- who cannot be portrayed in naturalistic form. They must by means of a certain stylization be made super-human figures, portraying the noble, the loyal, the demoniacal, etc. These characteristics are manifested not only in the outline of the figures, but in the detail.

The puppet, which is a mobile, expressive, pictorial element, must by means of facial expression and especially the expression of the eyes, reveal the spiritual life and attitudes of the subject. The facial features are thus emphasized and enlarged without being distorted; the eyes are made particularly expressive, and characteristic features of body build are underlined. But facial expression is not the only means of characterization in shadow puppets. The surface of the entire figure is amenable not only to color but to line and pattern, to suggest costume and jewelry. These various elements are almost as important to characterization as the facial features are. This peculiarity of the shadow puppet, the use of the whole figure as a means of expression, was especially studied earlier and exploited with such consistency that old shadow puppets are also art objects in their own right.

The village artists have developed a tradition for cutting and decoration which varies from district to district and which has in the course of time undergone various stylistic changes. From a study of style one would be able to determine the age and provenance of the ancient shadow-play figures. This material has not been studied however, neither has it been investigated to determine whether there is any connection between pictorial elements in the folk art which the shadow play is considered to be, and the friezes, reliefs and classical temple sculpture which depict Indian dance.

More important than the drawn patterns and lines is the effect produced by perforation of the leather. The Andhra Pradesh puppets do not cast a massive shadow on the screen, but, when most artistically made, a delicate tracery formed by allowing the light to pass through thousands of openings. In this play on light and shade, carried into the detail, lies much of the supernatural and dreamlike effect of the shadow play.

A comparison between old and new dolls unfortunately shows that decorative technique is degenerating. The artists still have a certain skill, but the figures often lack life. Painted decoration has deteriorated and perforation is clumsy.

Color and Light

The interplay of color and light is a prerequisite for an important part of the shadow puppet's expression. The linear and punctuated perforation of the leather suggests the pattern and drape of the costume, jewelry, fruit, flower and dewdrops; the idyllic, the poetic and the spiritual. Demons have little or no perforation, with the exception of Ravana, king of the demons, on whom more color and ornament are lavished than on gods and heroes.

The light source was originally a row of oil lamps, giving a warm but flickering light. When the lamps are topped up or the wicks trimmed, the light flares up, an effect which is employed when important figures like Ravana make their entrance. The light has just the strength and quality necessary to transfer to the screen not only the outline of the puppet, but the colors with which it is painted.

The original colors were black, red and green and their intermixtures, made from the plant extracts, soot and various earths available to any troupe. In the earliest dolls one finds, besides red and black, shades of green, blue, yellow, brown and reddish blue, which harmonized with the reddish-yellow light of the oil lamp. The light amber of the unpainted leather was often used for female faces or for special costume effects.[7]

In the choice of color, definite traditions are followed. Female figures are often kept in shades of yellow, orange and brown. Rama's face is a dark indigo, as he is described in the *Ramayana* as a very dark-skinned person. Ravana is painted in showy red colors, while Rama's loyal follower and brother Lakshmana has a light, womanish facial tint, corresponding to his mild character.

Chapter 23, verse 1 of the ancient Indian treatise, the *Natya śastra*, gives about two hundred rules for costume and make-up, including a detailed description of the choice of color for various characters in a drama: "I shall speak in due order, O Brahmins, about the Costumes and Make-up, for the entire production [of a play] depends on these."[8]

The *Natya śastra* deals with drama, with actors, but does not mention marionette and shadow theater. Its inclusion in a comparative study of the color tradition in Indian folk drama, whether with live actors or marionettes, could throw light on the color tradition, color psychology and decoration technique which is the basis for the design of the shadow puppets.[9]

The most important source for textual studies of the shadow play in Andhra Pradesh is the *Ramayana ranganatham*. As mentioned in the introduction, this Telugu version of the *Ramayana* was written explicitly for shadow theater, when this drama form was a court art in the sixteenth century under King Kona Reddy in Kondapalli. Unfortunately, copies of this manuscript are not accessible, as they are in private hands, and no translation is available; but the manuscript is said to contain, besides the thematic text, practical information on the costume, perforation, coloring and construction of shadow puppets.

With respect both to the manufacture of shadow puppets and to the lighting, various types of modernization have occurred in recent years. About seventy-five years ago artificial pigments, which are often discordant with the light source, began to be used. Garish blue and purple came into use, and experts are able to date recent shadow puppets by the colors used. The greatest harm occurred, however, when the oil lamps were replaced by the Petromax type of paraffin lamp, which has to be pumped up at intervals, giving a sharp, cold, bluish-white light, which completely alters the esthetic values. All forms of original Indian drama (live drama, marionette theater and shadow theater) have used oil lamps or, on the entrance of important persons, primarily of demons, torches dipped in oil, sometimes also fires. When these light sources are altered, much of the grandeur and mystery of a performance disappears. In newly-made dolls, one finds an intemperate use of strong colors, and the vulgarization of the art form seems to have reached its height when leather dolls began to be replaced by figures cut out of thick plastic.[10]

Manipulation of the Puppet

The theater doll has qualities which have caused the drama theoretician E. G. Craig to consider letting the actor, if not replace, at least be influenced by the marionette.

> The actor must go, and in his place comes the inanimate figure -- the Über-marionette we may call him, until he has won for himself a better name.
>
> The marionette appears to me to be the last echo of some beautiful and noble art of a past civilization.[11]

In her treatise, *Rod-Puppets and the Human Theatre*,[12] Dr. Marjorie H. Batchelder has analyzed the properties of the theater doll, here briefly summarized:

> 1. The doll's strongest quality is its immediate ability to characterize. The doll is the person it represents.
>
> 2. The doll is devoid of egoism and nervousness; it acts its part in complete seriousness, which gives it power and dignity.
>
> 3. The doll does not tire; it is always ready. It has a funny and at the same time a mystical life.
>
> 4. The doll has a mask-like face -- it is itself a mask. If it is to communicate it must depend on a language of gesture.

Gesture language is the language of the shadow puppets. This applies particularly in Andhra Pradesh, where the various parts of the body are connected by strings with strong knots, sometimes further strengthened with transverse bamboo canes. Hands and arms have an enormous mobility and their possibilities for expression seem to be inexhaustible. By definition, the shadow puppet is a kind of rod-puppet held above the manipulator's head. The controlling rod is a cleft bamboo passing from the head to the crotch, so that the figure "rides" on the cleft stick as on a hobbyhorse. The bamboo cane continues in one piece below the crotch to serve as a handle. Two thin bamboo canes are connected to the puppet's hands, allowing them to be moved in all planes and positions. The legs hang down loosely, but by rapid jerks the puppeteer is able to move them as required in battle scenes or dancing. In the most advanced Andhra puppets, arms, hands, head and trunk -- and to some extent, legs -- are under the manipulator's control.

The female dancer occupies a central position in the shadow play. These dancing figures are often furnished with an extra articulation at the hips and shoulders. The head and neck has great mobility: the neck is connected to the trunk by means of a system of strings, and controlled by a handle of bamboo; this permits the puppeteer to move the head from side to side independently of the trunk. Tremendous skill and a lifetime's training are necessary if the expressive possibilities of this brilliantly contrived doll are to be used to full effect and two puppeteers are often needed to release all the expressions. The two-dimensional leather puppet attains in the swirling movements a further dimension. Behind the screen, the puppeteers dance in the classical Kuchapudi style,[13] unseen by the spectators, transferring their movements to the very demanding doll.

When the figures dance, they are pressed close to the screen, to be seen as a clear silhouette. The movements of head and neck, trunk, limbs and feet are shown with great accuracy. In a single jump, the figure turns and its shadow becomes nebulous. Even the color effects are altered; the contours are only suggested as in a manifestation of a figure out of this world, but the rhythm and the steps are retained. At the next second, the doll turns once more and is again pressed up to the screen, continuing its unbroken rhythmic movement.

In order to synchronize the movements of the actors with the sound, the puppeteers must provide song accompaniment and the song and words of the figures at the same time as they dance. The dance is a highly emotive dramatic element, which may provide the key approach to the understanding of Indian theater. In *Natya sastra* this experience is expressed in the *bhava-rasa* theory: "*Bhava* is the emotion that creates a sense of enjoyment or experience which in itself is an entity and that enjoyment or experiment is *rasa*." *Bhava* and *rasa* are like Siamese twins, where *bhava* is the body and *rasa* the soul.[14] When the shadows break into dance, one is closest to this experience.[15]

With surprising speed and tremendous effect, all the puppets suddenly disappear from the screen, as if an unseen hand had rubbed out the shadows, before new scenes commence. Sometimes figures are fastened to the screen with acacia thorns, so that several localities can be suggested simultaneously.

The puppeteers can, by varying the distance between puppet and screen, make the shadow large and indistinct or small and distinct, a device which can be employed to great effect. In battle scenes it is used regularly when gods and demons make their entrance. When great armies move against each other, arrows fly, and demons are struck and fall, this play on the distinct and the indistinct is deliberately employed to make a strong impression on the spectators. When, as in a dream, they witness the battle between Good and Evil, they experience *rasa*.

The ancient technique of manipulation seems to be well-preserved at several places in Andhra Pradesh. Explanation of the fingering and arm movements would require a new system of description; detailed photographs of the technique, or, better still, motion films would help to preserve shadow theater for posterity. Tolu Bommalu Kattu are, to the profane observer, merely humble pieces of decorated leather, but the shadow they cast has a dramatic effect which cannot fail to impress. Dr. H. K. Ranganath's words on Togalu Bombe, the parallel form in Mysore, are even more appropriate to the Andhra Pradesh shadow puppets:

> Togalu Bombe is an inspiring art in the hands of an expert who has achieved a mastery as to make his images live and perform miracles. A full-fledged performance, usually based on a mythological theme, would show on the screen human and animal figures in fantastic attire, moving, dancing and performing acrobatics, all in close synchrony with the background music by the chorus and the spoken words shouted by the manipulators. Battle scenes with moving armies are highly impressive. This art provides a great scope for the creation of fantastic pictures on the screen. The figures are specially made with meticulous care to give wild appearance and imposing movements. It can give a real experience, an experience that cannot be had from the modern stage even with all its amenities.[16]

The Stage

Like nearly all traditional Indian folk drama, the play is performed in the open air on a temporary stage. The size of the stage depends on the materials on hand and on the size of the puppets. The screen must be almost transparent for the finest details of the shadow to be seen if the projected light is weak. Two or more snow-white pieces of cloth are used and cover the whole front of the stage. They are stretched out, pinned together with *tumma-mulla* (thorns from the acacia tree) and made fast to the corner posts. The screen has to be evenly stretched, without folds or hollows, to avoid distortion of the image. It may be 3 - 8 m. in length and 2 - 3½ m. in height; if a big screen is used it is often necessary to use a central support to insure evenness.

Since the puppeteers can only control the dolls from knee-height, the screen does not reach the floor of the stage; the space between the screen and the ground is covered by a dark piece of cloth through which light cannot pass. The stage will, with a view to the sound effects among other things, be raised ½ m. above the ground. The booth is constructed like a house, its depth depending on the size of the troupe, but usually 2 - 3 m. The roof and the rear and side walls in the box-like booth are made of tarpaulins and sacking. The entrance is at the back, but once the troupe is inside, nobody normally leaves the booth during the six to eight hours of the performance. Babies are put to bed inside; it is possible to make tea, and only when a child begins to disturb the performance with its crying does a woman leave the booth with him.

Earlier, tradition dictated that the materials for the booth be provided by one of the prosperous peasants of the village whose people also took care of the construction of the booth and the clearing up after the performance. The cloths were provided by the village *dhobi* and the barber supplied the lamps.

To obtain the best result, the screen is made to slope slightly towards the auditorium. This, in conjunction with a rope tied between the foremost corner posts, about 75 cm. above the floor, prevents the puppets from slipping down during the play. The dolls can be stuck between this rope and the screen when they are not being manipulated.

Illumination

The traditional illumination employs oil lamps of metal or coconut shell suspended in a row behind the puppeteers' heads. Great care is needed to place the lamps at exactly the right distance from the screen. If they are too far away, not only do the puppeteers become visible to the spectators, but their shadows fall on the screen and confuse the effect. If the lamps are too close, only those puppets directly in front of the lamps will cast a satisfactory shadow, the others being either completely invisible or indistinct. To give the best result, the lamps must be placed at head-height and about 60 cm. from the screen

Oil lamps are today considered old-fashioned, and since they are an expensive source of illumination with an attendant fire risk, they have, as mentioned above, been replaced by Petromax lamps. As a result, much of the artistic effect and mystery has been lost. It is true that oil lamps could be seen through the screen, but the puppeteers and their shadows, and to a great extent the shadows of the controlling rods, were invisible if the lamps were suspended correctly.

Sound and Sound Effects

It is a constant source of wonder that a troupe of six to ten persons can fulfill the multifarious roles of manipulators, singers, dancers and instrumentalists in the narrow booth. The troupe is so practiced that every member seems able to take on any role, with two exceptions: the women of the troupe always provide the voices of the female dolls;[17] and the *sutradhar* always manipulates the dolls in the most difficult dance numbers. Songs in chorus alternate with dialogue and monologue, but only the songs have written texts, handed down from generation to generation. In general, the puppeteer himself lends voice to the doll he is manipulating, and as nearly fifty different dolls may take part in a single performance, the puppeteers have to be able to alter their voices to suit the role.

In battle scenes, which often occur in the heroic plays, expressive sounds like grunts and screams are used. Moreover, the floor is deliberately constructed to act as a giant xylophone. The puppeteers constantly play on the planks with their feet to supply rhythm and sound effects for the dance and single combat which are essential ingredients of the Andhra Pradesh shadow play.

Music

All the dramatic effects are utilized in Indian folk drama. Music and dance are used in communication to the same extent as dialogue, and the Andhra Pradesh shadow play conforms in this respect. It may be regarded as a medium whose most important dramatic element is the rhythmical expression of the shadows through dance. Song expresses ideas and thoughts, while dialogue serves the more concrete purpose of bringing the action forward. The dancing, on the other hand, fulfills the spectators' need for esthetic experience, besides serving to build up feeling and emotion.

No instrument is more characteristic of Indian folk music than the drum, the so-called *mridangam*, which is the basic instrument in shadow-play music. Drumming provides the overture, accompanies singers and other musicians, fills up pauses and imitates speech in rhythmical patterns; it underlies the entire performance and practically directs it with starting signals. Moreover, drumming in the village just before darkness falls announces a night performance. Traditionally, cymbals and ankle bells are also used, and in recent years the orchestra has been supplemented by a small harmonium providing monotonous background music. Sometimes a *muchavina* is also used, a brilliant wind instrument which like the drum has narrative character and can imitate language.

One can imagine that shadow theater in Andhra Pradesh fifty years or so ago was still an indispensable element of village society and that the music was just as familiar to the villagers as the theater. The impression one receives today is that the songs and instrumental music are just those elements of the shadow play which have survived best, on account of the fixed form and the written text.

In his book *Drama in Rural India*, J. C. Mathur gives a characterization of the narrative and lyrical music of a dance-drama which also applies to the shadow play:

> The arrangement of songs in Indian folk and traditional play is not conceived as an architectural whole. There is a string of songs, and each song has its own mode or raga, and its own tala or rhythmic sequence. The narrative ragas, used mostly in linking commentary of the sutradhar and also in brief repartees between any two characters, are usually not more than three or four in number. The lyrical ragas on the other hand, are numerous and there may be sometimes in one play as many as 20 - 30 ragas. The number of songs is, of course, more, there being several songs in one raga or mode. These songs seek to create the sentiment appropriate to the character or the situation. At the same time, they constitute the bulk of the dialogue.[18]

If the *sutradhar* is strong in vocal tradition, the troupe will use a variety of ragas.

Improvisation

Dialogue and monologue are improvised, and the reputation of a troupe depends on the *sutradhar*'s technique of improvisation. The story is already known to the public, and thus it is the *sutradhar*'s eloquence and ability to jest and give spontaneous and witty answers which are appreciated. The spectators value a performance for the skill of the puppeteers in respect of both their technique and their verbal performance.

Verbal improvisation comes into its own in some ribald scenes where the spectators can relax and enjoy themselves. In accordance with tradition, these scenes feature a grotesque married couple who sneak onto the screen after the most solemn passages to treat the audience to witty comments and refer to the latest events in the village. This couple and their hangers-on are the clowns of the shadow play. The husband, Kilikayata, is a drunken lecher and inverterate womanizer, being suitably equipped with an enormous penis which can be made erect by means of a string. In spite of his appearance he is cowardly, and trembles in fear of his fat, scandal-mongering wife, Bangaraka.[19] Four or five of these comical interludes may be included in a performance and they often occur just after a long section in heroic style, which has sent the audience to sleep. The funny intermezzos not only wake the spectators, but make them shake with laughter.

The Troupe

Puppetry is practiced by families who have followed this occupation for several generations as their sole livelihood or to supplement their income from work on the land. Like Indian society in general, a troupe of shadow players is organized on patriarchal lines. From childhood, the prospective puppeteers are trained by the *sutradhar* in puppet-making and manipulation. They are also trained in recitation and singing, and as there are no printed texts, only handwritten ones, these exercises must build on verbal tradition. The training demands great perseverance and a fabulous memory, besides a knowledge of body movements and dexterity in manipulation. The troupe of six to ten members consists of members of the same family or clan. It will contain at least two women to speak and sing the female roles.

The art of shadow playing seems to have "wandered" in the various regions of South India, and earlier it was popular first in one principality, then in another. Under the dominion of the Nayaka kings, who established themselves around the middle of the sixteenth century in Tanjore, present-day Madras, the art migrated southwards, but also to regions west of Andhra Pradesh in the state of Maharashtra. In the first part of the eighteenth century it gradually disappeared from Andhra Pradesh. It returned again in full strength however, but now practiced by artists from Maharashtra, who migrated to Andhra Pradesh from the regions around Belgaum and Bijapur in present-day Mysore. Several of the existing families of shadow players can trace their lineage back to Maharashtra, but the origin of the art is hidden in the distant past.[20] In Mysore, shadow theater is cultivated by nomadic troupes, the so-called *kille ketas*, who are also believed to derive from Maharashtra, whereas in Andhra Pradesh the troupes have a fixed abode.

The shadow puppets represent the troupe's capital, the only valuable possessions which have been handed down through the generations. Sometimes they can be used as a marriage dowry. Each doll represents a value of fifty to one-hundred rupees, and it has also been a tradition that well-to-do families presented dolls or leather to the troupe, who acknowledged the gift before or during the performance, drawing attention to the donor's generosity and excellence. To be involved in a performance as donor or patron is also considered, like mere attendance, to be an auspicious act.

Between the monsoons, the troupes tour the neighboring villages giving open-air performances; in the rainy season they do not perform. The *sutradhar* is the absolute leader of the troupe; he makes the arrangements, is the first singer and the first puppeteer.

As the performance is free to the spectators, the troupe depends for its income on the collection made during and after the performance, and on the generosity of the local landowners.

Theme

The theme of the traditional shadow play in Andhra Pradesh is taken from the great epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, from the legends and mythology of the *Puranas*, and from similar sources. The *Ramayana* plays are the most popular, especially the account of Sita's release from imprisonment in Lanka (Ceylon). The songs have attained a fixed form. Those for the *Ramayana* plays usually derive from Sri Ranganath or Sri Bhaskar.

A troupe normally has a repertoire of six to ten different plays varying in length between four and eight hours. No rehearsal is necessary, as the group has lifelong experience in song, instrumental music, dialogue and improvisation. A well-trained troupe is able to decide just before a performance what it will present. A performance may comprise one or two complete plays or excerpts from several different ones.

The most popular pieces are *Lanka dahanam*, *Myravana charitra*, *Indrajit vadha*, *Kichaka vadha*, *Dussasana katha* and *Prahlada charitra*.[21] They are performed in Telugu, but the *sutradhar* may show off his literary knowledge by including verses in Sanskrit.

Ritual

Siva worship and Tolu Bommalu Kattu belong together, Siva being the patron god of the shadow play; but both the temple and theater are cultural elements which are losing their importance. However, on the god's birthday, marked by the Mahasivratri festivities in May, plays are still performed outside the Siva temple at some places in Andhra Pradesh.[22] Formerly, these plays could continue for nine consecutive nights from evening to first light. During Mahasivratri the troupe's prospects of earning are greatest, as devotees and worshippers of the god consider it a religious duty and an auspicious act to make a donation of money, however small.

Formerly too, a lamp would be lit in the Siva temple and borne in procession by the players through the village to the accompaniment of song and instrumental music. The procession passed three times round the booth and stage, and finally sang a hymn to the elephant god, Ganesha, who is worshipped for his great knowledge and ability to carry a performance through to a successful conclusion. During this panegyric the oil lamps behind the screen were lit from a flame taken from the temple, and all the shadow puppets in their imaginative forms revealed.

The panegyric to Ganesha continued during the opening scene, where one saw the god sitting on his mount, the sacred rat, surrounded by trees and birds. After this the *sutradhar* announced the title of the play and introduced the characters.

Before the performance, the shadow dolls, wrapped in a piece of cloth, are brought into the booth. Even a hundred dolls packed together do not take up much room. The bundle is shown the greatest respect. The order is perfect; the puppets can be quickly grouped and the puppeteers can with precision find those they are to use and have them ready. Sometimes a number of dolls are waiting, held by the outstretched rope, immovable, but waiting to take part in the play.

The Kumara Raja Rao Troupe

During a festival of folk drama in Hyderabad in March 1970, where shadow plays were performed for the first time in the capital of Andhra Pradesh, I met *sutradhar* Kumara Raja Rao and commissioned a shadow play performance in his native village of Dharmarao Cheruvupalli, sending him a sum of money in advance. The story was to be from the *Ramayana* and I had insured that oil lamps would be the illumination.

The village of Dharmarao Cheruvupalli, officially abbreviated D.C. Palli, is situated about eighty km. west of Nellore, the main town in the district of that name. The members of Kumara Raja Rao's troupe are no different from the other villagers in their way of life and attitudes. The woman of whom I asked the way to "Kumara Raja Rao, Tolu Bommalu Kattu" broke into a broad smile and accompanied me to Rao's house, where I was received with great hospitality. The troupe has seven members: two women, three older men, *sutradhar* Kumara Raja Rao and his brother's sixteen year-old son, who is due to be the next *sutradhar*.

The members of the troupe are landless, and now, when the demand for performances is dwindling rapidly, they face hard times. In recognition of this, the state of Andhra Pradesh has founded a center in the village for the production of shadow puppets. Outside a mud-built house is a notice bearing the legend "Government of Andhra Pradesh, Department of Industries and Commerce, Pilot Centre for Leather Puppet cum Dolls Industry, D.C. Palli, Atmakur (Taluk)." This industry has not yet started, however; leather for the dolls is not available, only tools and a little pigment are at hand. Raja Rao told me of the long tradition of shadow theater in the village, and of the great guru, "dead many years ago." The guru had written down the songs for the plays, and these texts are used by the troupe today. With veneration Raja Rao showed me twelve worn leather-bound books containing them.

Construction of the Stage

At 3:00 P.M. Raja Rao digs the holes for the four corner posts, which are the bearing posts for the construction, with a short-handled angle spade. He also digs a hole for a post to strengthen the rear wall of the booth. In the heat it is strenuous work to make the holes deep enough in the hard, dry earth in the area in front of the temple. This is the natural meeting place for the villagers. He tells me that he performed at this site a month ago. After a couple of hours, the 7-m.-tall, somewhat inclined posts are erected and the earth around them tamped down.

At about 5:00 P.M. the three older members of the troupe arrive. They tie the transverse beams in place between the posts and lay the floor of the stage, talking all the while. Two large stones which lie inside the rectangle of the booth serve to strengthen the floor. Only a few plants are to be found in the village and they are warped and bleached by sun and rain. The corner posts facing the auditorium indicate the inclination of the screen. No nails are used, the whole construction being tied together.

At 8:00 P.M. the two cloths forming the screen are placed in position. The back wall, roof and sides are hung with dark, blue material. Finally, a 1-m.-broad opaque cloth closes the space between the lower edge of the screen and the ground. It has been so dark from 7:00 P.M. on that the work has been carried out by the light of two paraffin lamps. Two men sit on the ground and make eight oil lamps ready. These are iron containers with a handle. The men put cow dung in the bottom, over which they pour peanut oil. The lamps, which are furnished with four wicks, are placed in a row on the floor of the stage just in front of the screen.

Description of a Shadow Play Performance in Dharmarao Cheruvupalli, March 29, 1970

9:00 P.M.: Around a fire on the theater site is a group of men playing the *dappulu*, an ancient percussion instrument. They announce in song that a performance will be held.

9:20 P.M.: It is dark in the shadow theater. The troupe has taken its place inside and is singing the introductory hymns to Siva and Sri Rama, the principal actor in the play. About 300 spectators are assembled, about half of them children. They have brought woven bast mats which are spread out on the ground. They sit and talk quietly together while the children run around.

9:30 P.M.: The oil lamps are lit on the floor of the stage, and hung in position. Ganesha is shown in tableau, with his mount, the giant rat, at his side. The praises of Ganesha are sung. The song also expresses confidence that the god will keep interfering spirits away, so that the performance will be successful. Ganesha rides out on the rat.

9:40 P.M.: The goddess of wisdom, Saraswathi, makes her entrance. She is worshipped in song and entreated to let her wisdom -- and that of the performance -- be transferred to the spectators, so they may benefit from the performance. Saraswathi expresses her willingness in a fantastic dance, accompanied by song and instrumental music.

9:55 P.M.: The first comical sequence. Kilikayata and Bangaraka appear.

The latter, with an exaggeratedly large ornament in her nose, comes on first with her naughty little boy, who gets up to all manner of tricks which his mother seems to delight in. Kilikayata comes on, a black figure with an enormous penis. He attempts to kiss Bangaraka, but gets his face slapped instead. Bangaraka reproaches her husband for not having been home for several nights. Kilikayata's cousin arrives. He proposes to Bangaraka, with the result that the jealous Kilikayata challenges him. They wrestle and fight for a while but reach some kind of accommodation, to end the sequence as friends.

10:15 P.M.: Bangaraka, Kilikayata and the cousin address the audience. Each household is mentioned in turn. Jokes are made about the spectators. The guest, who has paid for the performance, is mentioned too.

10:30 P.M.: The *sutradhar* introduces the play, "The Freeing of Sita." Sri Rama lives in the forest, exiled from his native Ayodhya with his wife, Sita, and his brother Lakshmana. Rama is portrayed in song and dance as the symbol of love and chivalry. The idyll in the forest and the joy attained through a life of deprivation and asceticism is expressed. Lakshmana is portrayed as the loyal and devoted friend and brother.

10:50 P.M.: Quick change to Lanka. Ravana's army of demons, *rakshasas*, which are wolf-like figures with long teeth, is shown. The powers of evil have thus been introduced.

The hero in this *Ramayana* play is the monkey-god Hanuman, immortal son of the wind-god, Vayu. Hanuman's ability to change shape and swell up "like the sea at high tide" is illustrated by a set of dolls of increasing size. His strength is shown with jumps and somersaults.

Nearly two hours are devoted to introductory ceremonies, addresses to the spectators and presentations of the theme. After this the pace quickens. The troupe acts out the events from the last part of the *Ramayana*, which ends with Sita's release and the death of Ravana. The performance ends at 4:45 A.M. with the singing of hymns of thanks.

The Spectators

The Indian film industry has caused a violent decline in the various forms of folk drama. In large villages there are open-air cinemas or cinemas accommodated in tent-like houses built of woven bast mats. Only a few of the inhabitants of D.C. Palli will have attended a film show, however, and the nearest cinema is the travelling one which occasionally visits a village about 25 km. away

I had expected more than the 150 of the adult villagers who attended the performance. Perhaps the limited attendance was due to the performance being detached from its original connection with the Siva festival or with other festivals traditionally associated with shadow play performances.

The spectators arrived at 9:00 P.M., the women in small groups carrying the smallest children. Some had paraffin lamps with them, so one saw small flames coming out of the darkness. When they came nearer, the faces were illuminated in flashes, as if the shadow play had already begun. The women rolled their mats out on the ground and sat in groups in the temple area. The paraffin lamps were allowed to burn all night, the groups forming small, faintly flowing islets in the large space. The men either stood or sat around the edge of the area. The spectators followed the play expectant and restrained. It was not long before the smallest children fell asleep and lay flat on the mats on the bare ground.

Except to the Bangaraka-Kilikayata sequences and the direct address to the audience, one did not notice any violent reaction. There was, however, also a response after the entrance of Ravana, during the dances, and during Hanuman's jumping, dancing, acrobatics and transmutations. Hanuman was the children's favorite.

The spectators talked quietly during the performance, remarking on the play or on any other event. If they became tired, they lay down on the mats or on the ground and slept for a couple of hours. One can see this behavior during village performances of other kinds of theater. The spectators are interested in the preferred passages, and rest during the other scenes.

In one corner of the place was a tea stall with three men serving. Pots of boiling milk and water hung over a fire. The customers, all men, watched the performance squatting by the fire. At 2:00 A.M. the spectators started to go home; mothers had difficulty finding and waking their children, who had fallen asleep all over the place. About half the spectators stayed on until the performance ended at 4:45 A.M.

The Shadow Play and Modern Technique

The Central Leather Research Institute in Madras has in the course of ten years carried out investigations, collected material in the shape of old shadow puppets, and established a troupe of puppeteers with the aim of resuscitating the dying drama form. An attempt is being made to combine traditional working forms with the use of modern aids. The performances make use of electric light, loudspeakers and taped music. It has been found that red neon tubes can almost reproduce the effect of the village oil lamps. Machined leather and rational methods of drawing, cutting, perforating, coloring and decorating are used. Only a few of the new dolls are used in performances. Most of them are exported to the United States or sold as tourist souvenirs in the large towns.

The troupe from the Central Leather Research Institute has modern plays on its bill, like the play about Gandhi and an educational play on family planning.

FOOTNOTES

1. In the Javanese form of shadow play, Wayang Kulit, the spectators were formerly divided, the women seeing the play as dancing shadows on the screen, while the men were on the same side of the screen as the puppeteers and thus saw the actual, beautifully painted figures move against the screen as a background.

2. Pischel, *Die Heimat des Puppenspiels* (Halle, 1900), p. 6 says, "Es ist nicht unwahrscheinlich, dass das Puppenspiel Uberhaupt die älteste Form dramatischer Darstellung ist. Sicher ist dies der Fall in Indien. Und dort haben wir auch seine Heimat zu suchen."

3. G. Ramakrishna Rao, "Leather Puppets in Andhra Pradesh," *Natya*, 9, 2, (1966), pp. 15-16 says, "Historical records eloquently speak to the abundant royal patronage offered in the past to leather puppetry by the Satavahanas, Pallavas, Chalikyas, Kakatiyas and in the greater degree by the rulers of Vijayanagara." Also, "Indian Puppets," *Mārg*, 21, 3, (June 1968), p. 33 says, "Shri Achariyalu possesses a copy of the manuscript *Ramayana Ranganathan*, written specially for puppets in the time of King Kona Bhudha Reddy in the 16th century, under whose keen patronage the art had really flourished."

4. J. Tilakasiri, *The Puppet Theatre of Asia* (Colombo, 1970), p. 8 says, "The *chāyā-nāṭaka* (meaning literally *shadow-drama*, *shadow-play*) . . . is used to designate a collection of dramas, including the famous *Dūtāṅgada* of Subhata of the 13th century A.D. The term *chāyā-nāṭaka* has been interpreted in various ways and doubts were raised as to what it exactly meant."

5. K. V. Gopalaswamy, "Puppet Show and Shadow Play," an article of ten pages published by the Andhra Pradesh Sangeet Natak Akademi, Hyderabad.

6. The original meaning of the word *sutradhar* is believed to be "stringholder" (puppeteer?). Since this term is also used in classical Sanskrit theater for the stage-manager/producer role -- the person who presents the play to the public -- it is advanced by Pischel as one of the proofs of relationship between marionette theater and drama employing live actors.

   Concerning the meaning of *sutradhar* and *chaya-nataka* (cf. note 4) see Kindermann (1966, section: "Das Indische Theater," pp. 21-120. Further, Ridgeway (1915), pp. 153-216.

7. Gopalaswamy.

8. Bharata, *The Natyasastra*, tr. Manomohan Ghosh, I (Calcutta, 1967), p. 411.

9. One reason for the lack of written accounts of the history of shadow theater may be that this medium was from early on considered to be a form of folk art. It is not unusual for folk art forms in India to lack historical background material.

10. Technical advances have during the past decade influenced both dance-drama and marionette theater in India. It has been found that certain drama forms are not only able to adjust to alterations in their external framework, but also to profound changes affecting their content. This applies to Jātra, Nauṭankī and Tamāshā, which have no ritual significance. But in the case of ritual drama -- like shadow theater -- changes can hardly occur without weakening the dramatic effect. See A. J. Gunawardana, "From Ritual to Rationality: Notes on the Changing Asian Theatre," *The Drama Review*, 15, 3 (1971).

11. In the second issue of *The Mask* (April, 1908) Edward Gordon Craig published his sensational essay, "The Actor and the Über-marionette". On the origin of the theater doll he writes, "He is a descendant of the stone images of the old temples -- he is today a rather degenerate form of a god."

12. (Columbus, Ohio, 1947).

13. Kuchipudi, a village in the Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh, is believed to be the home of the dance tradition called *Kuchipudi Bharata natya*. The region is also known for its dance-drama.

14. P. S. R. Appa Rao, *A Monograph on Bharata's Naatya Saastra* (Hyderabad,1967).

15. *Natyasastra*, chapter VI, verse 31, pp. 105-106 says, "What is the meaning of the word *rasa*? It is said in reply (that *rasa* is so called) because it is capable of being tasted. How is *rasa* tasted? (In reply) it is said that just as well-disposed persons while eating food with many kinds of spice, enjoy its tastes and attain pleasure and satisfaction, so cultured people taste the Durable Psychological States while they see them represented by an expression of the various Psychological States with Words, Gestures and the Sattva and derive pleasure and satisfaction."

The *Natya sastra* is believed to date from about 300 B.C.

16. *The Karnatak Theatre* (Dharwar, 1960).

17. In folk drama with live actors and most forms of marionette theater, all the roles are played by men and boys. It is remarkable that women act both as puppeteers and singers in the Andhra Pradesh shadow plays.

18. (New York, 1964), pp. 105-106.

19. Tilakasiri points out that this comical married couple in reality represents an ancient fertility cult, Sanskrit literature mentioning special festivals, where ritual invective was used.

20. The theory that shadow theater originated in Maharashtra, which is based on the fact that several of the troupes who cultivate the art today can trace their lineage back to this state, does not stand up to close scrutiny.

21. All traditional shadow plays have mythological content. *Lanka dahanam* (Lanka's Fire) from the *Ramayana* is the favorite.

22. Ranganath writes on the ritual function of shadow theater in Mysore that, "The Art of Togalu Bombe seems to have enjoyed a great religious significance for centuries in the Kannada land, particularly in North Karnatak and in the Kolar and Chitaldurg districts of Mysore. It was a time-honored tradition to put up a Togalu Bombe performance in the temple to invoke the village deity to shower timely rains."

Darius Swann

THE BRAJ RĀS LĪLĀ

Transcription of a performance

Transcriber's Notes

The Rās Līlā is a form of traditional theatre based on the Krishna legend and a product of the North India Braj area, a region lying in the state of Uttar Pradesh about ninety miles south of Delhi. A Rās Līlā performance is divided in two parts: the first part, the Nitya Rās, is a ritualized representation in song and dance of the lovemaking of Rādhā and Krishṇa in the eternal, divine realm, the second part, the Līlā, is representation in dialogue, song, and sometimes, dance of some event from the earthly career of Krishṇa, the avatar of Vishnu. Especially associated with Braj, the region of Krishṇa's birth, childhood, and youth, the Rās Līlā is enacted in an atmosphere of fervent religious devotion, upon which it draws and to which it contributes. In fact, it is performed to make real and present to the spectators the divine love of Rādhā and Krishṇa.

The Rās Līlā is performed by professional troupes led by a manager-director who is called *svāmī*. The all-male actors and dancers are supported by an orchestra-chorus which shares the singing and provides accompaniment for the dancers. The actors who play the parts of Rādhā, Krishṇa, and the milkmaids are young boys, usually between the ages of six and thirteen. The other actors, who appear only in the Līlā, may be adults. The present-day Rās Līlā orchestra instruments are the *sāraṅgī*, cymbals and drums and harmonium. In most cases the harmonium has replaced the *sāraṅgī*.

The place of performance of the Rās Līlā is called the *rās mandal*. The standard *rās mandal* is circular as the name indicates, the shape doubtlessly dictated by the original dance which was also circular; but the circle, as the symbol of eternity, reinforces the meaning of the Nitya Rās. The lovemaking of lover and beloved is set in the eternal realm and is manifested only to those who have eyes of faith and hearts given in devoted service to their Lord.

On one side of the *mandal* is the throne, the seat of which is about four feet high, and from it two broad steps lead down to floor level. In front of this throne, extending into the circular floor area, is marked out (usually by sheets or rugs) a rectangular playing area, measuring from fifteen to twenty feet in depth and from ten to twelve feet in width. On the side of the playing area facing the throne sit the singers and the musicians.[1] Behind them and on the other two sides of the playing area sit the spectators. A curtain divides the playing area from the throne area.

The *rās mandal* usually has a roof supported by pillars which serves as a convenient shelter for performances during the rainy season -- the main season for Rās Līlā. At both Topīkunj and Kishore Van in Vrindāban the *rās mandal* adjoins a temple. At Topīkunj the throne faces the temple; at Kishore Van one must pass through the *rās mandal* area to enter the temple.

Although the *rās mandal* is in one sense an open-air stage, the Rās Līlā has never been a "public" theatre, but a theatre located within a temple grounds or other private place. As it is a mystery which the uninitiated might misunderstand, there is no inclination on the part of its performers to display it before the eyes of profane unbelievers.

A performance takes place in a private and intimate atmosphere and follows a fixed pattern which varies in only minor detail from one troupe or occasion to another. This order can be summarized as follows:

The Nitya Rās

1. After makeup and costuming the actors playing the roles of Krishṇa, Rādhā and the milkmaids (called *sakhīs* or *gopīs*) take their places behind the curtain which momentarily divides the throne from the audience and playing area. The musicians also take their places.

2. The curtain is drawn, revealing the opening tableau (*jhāṅkī*) in which Krishṇa is seated on the right side of the throne with Rādhā on his left. The milkmaids (usually four or six in number) are seated on the steps at each side of the throne.

3. The leader of the troupe (*svāmī*) sings the invocatory song (*mangalācharan*) in praise of gods and gurus. Other members of the chorus, known as *samājīs*, may also sing, in turn, devotional songs.

4. The *āratī* ceremony is performed while the *āratī* song is sung by the *sakhīs*. This ceremony consists of waving in a vertically circular fashion a lighted lamp before Rādhā and Krishṇa.

5. One of the *sakhīs* approaches Rādhā and Krishna, still seated on the throne, and invites them to join them in the dancing area. They accept and go down.

6. Then follows a series of songs and dances in varying formations, involving Rādhā, Krishṇa, and the *sakhīs*, which establishes a mood of happy, romantic love play. This series includes *bols*, rhythmic sound syllables recited by the leader to give the pattern of the drumming and dancing.

7. The curtain is drawn and the actors rest. During this interval the leader and chorus sing.

8. Then follows a second series of songs and dances.

9. Krishṇa comes forward and delivers a sermon or discourse[2] which consists of an exposition of one of Krishṇa's *līlās*, or reflections on some subject related to Braj, love, or devotion. The discourse may be interspersed with verses of song.

10. A final tableau of Rādhā and Krishṇa is exhibited. While this is being prepared behind the curtain, one of the *sakhīs* leads the spectators in singing a devotional hymn (*kīrtan*). During the final tableau, spectators press forward to make offerings to Rādhā and Krishna.[3]

The Līlā

There is usually an interval of five to ten minutes between the ending of the Nitya Rās and the beginning of the *līlā*. The musicians resume playing and continue to sing until the *līlā* is begun.

The *līlā* which follows the Nitya Rās may have as its subject matter any of the events of the childhood or youth of Krishṇa. The *līlās* include events from the birth of Krishṇa to the time when he goes to Mathurā to slay Kan̄sa. With two exceptions, events subsequent to his triumph over Kan̄sa at Mathurā are never enacted. The exceptions are the Uddhav Līlā (The *Līlā* of Uddhav) and the Sudāmā Līlā (The *Līlā* of Sudāmā), the former concerning Krishṇa's stay in Mathurā following the slaying of Kan̄sa, the latter his sojourn in Dvārakā after being forced by his enemies to leave Mathurā.

The *līlā* is a one-act play made up of elements of dialogue in prose, poetry, and song. In addition to the dialogue of characters on the stage, the leader of the troupe, who is usually the chief singer, often interjects songs full of religious imagery which serve to build emotion and atmosphere for the action. As one may see from the Śankar Līlā, the actor frequently recites or sings a verse and immediately follows it with a prose paraphrase. The poetry, lyric and heavy with images, calls forth deep religious associations and stimulates deep feeling in the audience. The prose paraphrase clarifies the meaning.

Unlike the actors in the Nitya Rās who are all boys ranging from about eight to fourteen years in age, adult males also take part in the *līlā*. They represent a wide range of characters, from demons to holy ascetics. The play usually ends either with the ritual of the waving of the lights (*āratī*) or a tableau.

Some *līlās* include dance, but it is certainly minor in quantity compared with the amount in the Nitya Rās. The leader of the chorus is the key person in the performance; he initiates the play and keeps it going, interjects songs from a large repertory to build mood and emotion, prompts the actors, corrects them and in general holds the production together. He may vary his choice of song on any given occasion as the situation or spectator response warrants. He may be a composer of songs in his own right, or he may not, but he must have at his command a large body of devotional poetry. Calling upon his knowledge and memory, he is able by rendering an appropriate song at the right moment to create atmosphere and mood. The store of poetry which the leader has to draw on is large. Many Braj poets of the past found their inspiration in the passionate love of Rādhā and Krishṇa and Krishṇa's other exploits.

The basic source of the Krishṇa myth is the *Bhāgavata purāṇa*, but many of the stage plays are apparently from other sources of popular legend.

The *nitya rās* and *sankar līlā* printed below were performed by Svāmī Rūp Lāl's troupe at Kishore Van in Vrindāban on August 16, 1970. The performance was recorded on tape and later transcribed. This translation has been made from the transcription.

NITYA RĀS

Invocation (*Mangalācharaṇ*)

Homage to my revered teacher,
To my most compassionate teacher I bow.
The full autumn moon sheds its lustre on the scene,
And everyone is filled with spirit.
Krishṇa is with Rādhā in Vrindāban
And resides with the sages in Indra's heaven.
I bow to the beautiful couple, Rādhā and Krishṇa.
Śrī[4] Rādhā is my mistress; I am her servant.
Grant that in birth after birth
I may reside in Vrindāban.
Sing the prasises of the Prince of Braj,
And you will obtain a treasury of joy.
Sing the devotion of the saints of Braj,
And you will obtain the riches of Krishṇa.
Guru is Brahmā, guru is Vishnu, guru is Śankar;[5]
I bow to my guru who is verily God.
All creatures of the world, wise or foolish,
Pay homage to the guru who gives the vision of knowledge.
I lay my petitions at the feet of Krishṇa, the virtuous,
Who fulfills all the wishes of his devotees,
And who performs the dance in Braj.

Long live Krishṇa!

Āratī Song

(A *gopī* performs the *ārati* while the other *gopīs* sing and dance.)

Refrain: Perform the *ārati* maidens of Braj,
Waving the golden platters.

Lord of the milkmaids, light of the saints,
pearl of the destitute,
The *gopīs'* hearts will be full of joy.

Refrain: Perform the *ārati*, maidens of Braj,
Waving the golden platters.

Nanda's son, Ghanśyām[6] has put on yellow garments;
With him is the lovely Rādhā, Brishbhanu's daughter.

Refrain: Perform the *ārati*, maidens of Braj,
Waving the golden platters.

When Krishṇa, wearing the beautiful peacock crown,
And casting playful, mischievous glances,
On the *gopīs* adorned in yellow garments
That shine like the bright moonlight,
Sits on the throne, then the millions of *gopīs*
Are put to shame before his beauty,
And the gods are pleased to look upon the scene.

Refrain: Perform the *ārati*, maidens of Braj,
Waving the golden platters.

SPECTATORS: Shout victory to Vrindāban's Bihārī Lāl![7]

Poetry (Recited)

Victory to him who wears the yellow clothing,
The one with the sharp eye and the beautiful turban.
Victory to him who wears earrings reaching down to his cheeks,
And seeing whom beloved Rādhā smiles.

Victory to him who dances the *rās* all night
And who fills the hearts of the milkmaids with joy.

With great love and affection for him who does the dance of love,
Shout, victory to Rās Bihārī.[8]

Dialogue (The Invitation)

A GOPĪ: O Beloved Ones, the time for your *Nitya Rās* has come; so please come into the *rās mandal*.

KRISHṆA: O Śrī Kishori,[9] please come to the *rās mandal*.

RĀDHĀ: Let us go, beloved.

Song

(This song and the next are performed by Krishṇa and the chorus; the chorus repeats all or part of each line. Krishṇa, Rādhā, and the *gopīs* dance, the fast movements coming at intervals between lines, or while the chorus is singing.)

Queen Rādhā, compassionate, beloved of Krishṇa,
Remember me, O daughter of Brishbhānu.
The cynosure of all eyes, the beloved of Krishṇa,
Has enhanced the beauty of Braj.
Krishṇa's face is like the moon's *chakor* bird.[10]
From Rādha's feet such beauty flows
That the sight of them is like the flowers of a comet
And entices the honey bees.
You are the life treasure of the children of Braj, the treasure of joy.
O Light of the Beauty of Braj Mandal, remember me.
O Beauteous One, Divine One, Passionate One, Native of Braj, Queen of Braj,
Lalitā and the other *gopīs* are your companions.
Whether you agree or not, Rādhā and Krishṇa are a pleasing pair,
The example of the mistress of Braj is well-known;
Her kindness to her faithful followers is unequalled.
O Rādhā, you bestow showers of happiness upon the Braj maidens.
O lovely daughter of Brishbhānu, do not forget me.

The Swing Song

O Rādhā, daughter of Brishbhanu, let us go swing.
It is Srāvan; Tīj has come, and the dark clouds have gathered.[11]

Turn in the direction of the cloud's shower -- slowly the drops begin to fall.

Refrain: O Rādhā, daughter of Brishbhānu, let us go swing.

The lovely swing is hung upon the branch of the beautiful *kadamba* tree.[12]
You are the giver of happiness to all; let us swing with joy.

Refrain: O Rādhā, daughter of Brishbhānu, let us
go swing.

You wear a beautiful sari, Brishbhānu's daughter;
Hear my plea and give joy to all,
For you are the storehouse of all happiness.

Shout, victory to Vrindāban Bihārī Lāl!

(Here the *svāmī* sang a piece of classical music which included *bols*, that is sound syllables giving the pattern of the drumming and the dancing.)

Song (Interval)

(The *svāmī* sings this long song while the actors rest behind the drawn curtain.)

O Sakhī, Tīj or Srāvan is beautiful and happiness
is all around
In such an atmosphere the heart beats with love,
The kind of love that brings supreme pleasure.
Rādhā is Krishna's life and Krishṇa is Rādhā's.
At the sight of Krishṇa's face all eyes are filled
with love.
The partridge is perturbed by the sun's rays.
And finds satisfaction in the nectar of the moon.
O sakhī, the honey bee rejoices at the sight of your
lotus-like eyes.
They appear like bowls of pollen.
At night her brow is marked with sandalwood paste
Which glistens like a spot of vermillion
As the *chataka* bird is pleased by the moon,
So is everyone pleased at the sight of her.
The sight of her curly hair delights Krishṇa.
Her appearance is like Kama's [Love's], alive in the flesh.
The melody of Krishṇa's lips and flute vanquishes
the mind.
It is as if a flood of nectar innundates Braj.
His sweet smile captured the hearts of gods, men,
and Sūrdās.[13]
His earrings, crown, and garments are bearers of
good luck.
His beauty blesses all living things -- homes, ponds, etc.
On his beautiful cheek is a mole, and attention is
fastened on his beautiful beard.
His costume and smile enchant all -- gods, men, *nāgas*
Sūrdās [14]
Blessed are the eyes which behold the form of Gopāla.[15]
Sūrdās imagines with loving devotion the presence of
Krishṇa.
At the sight of Krishṇa's face all eyes are filled
with love;
Why have you left the pond of love to wander in the
desires of the mind?
When roses and marigolds bloom in abundance, why abide
in the shadow of brambles?
Sūrdās says that such love should be for one's beloved
only.
I have vowed to cling to the feet of Rādhikā.

Verse (Sung)

(The assistant singer sang this solo.)

I have perceived the glory of Śyām
By virtue of which sinners like me
  yearn for Vrindāban.
O Rādhā queen, when will you grant us a vision of
  yourself?
Whoever beholds her becomes her slave.
I have perceived the glory of Syām.

Couplet

(The *svāmī* sang this couplet.)

The flute of Krishna sounds solemnly sweet;
The happy melody resounds on Jamunā's banks.

Song

(The dancers return. The chorus and dancers alternate and sometimes join in singing.)

The dark clouds burst forth in rain and the fearful
  lightning flashes.
Frogs and crickets, peacocks and cuckoos, each salutes
  the coming of Sravan.
From the housetop the cock crows and the cuckoo sings
  his song.
The dark clouds burst forth in rain and the fearful
  lightning flashes.

Couplet

(Sung by the *svāmī*.)

Śrī Rādhā is my mistress; I am her servant
Grant that birth after birth I may reside in Vrindāban.
Grant me the good fortune to dwell in these bowers in
  the shadows of Vanśibat.
The desire of the saints is in the hands of Rādhā's
  bridegroom.

Song

(Sung by the dancers and the chorus.)

The dark clouds burst forth in rain and the fearful
  lightning flashes.
The fierce wind sings a melody and the cricket answers
  with his cry.
From the housetop the cock crows and the cuckoo sings
  his song.
The dark cloud bursts forth in rain and the fearful
  lightning flashes.

The Sermon

KRISHNA: In Vrindabān I, joyous Krishṇa, performed many *līlās*, but among them all the *līlā* of the stealing of the curds is sweetest of all. He who stole is the Lord of the world, and between his stealing and mine, what a difference there is -- like the difference between heaven and hell, poison and nectar. There are eight reasons for this.

The first is that man steals because he falls into want, but I am sufficiently supplied with everything. When man steals he takes away the property of others, but everything in the world belongs to me. Tell me then, when one takes his own property, how can anyone make even the slightest accusation of theft? Stealing means taking other people's things. Further, no one calls a thief to his house, but the milkmaids of Braj invited me to their houses again and again, causing me to steal. The thief steals by stealth and, failing that, by force, to the extent that he even commits murder. But truly my stealing is only by guile, never in the least violence. Man does those acts which work to his harm. First, by these acts he commits great sin; if he is caught he suffers punishment on their account. Secondly, he causes great harm to the property of others and brings great sorrow to them, but by my theft rivers of happiness are caused by flow. By the hearing of theft and the mention of theft virtue is decreased and sin is increased.

The teller and the hearer experience only disaster. But mention of the stealer of butter increases virtue and decreases sin. The teller and the hearer experience exceeding joy. So between my stealing and ordinary theft there is as much difference as between heaven and hell, poison and nectar.

In sacred Vrindāban joyous Krishṇa performed many *līlās*. Vrindaban's queen of love, Śrī Rādhā has had compassion on all souls, for the sake of holy Vrindāban. The sages have freely sung the glory of Braj and thanks to Father Brahmā. And the love of the saints and other devotees is the substance of their song.

Verse (Sung)

(Sung by Krishṇa and chorus)

I am fond of clay.
One day I ate some Braj clay.
Mother was very angry.
Within my mouth she saw the three worlds.
Terrified was she, poor mother.

Prose

One day I showed Mother Yaśodā countless universes in my mouth, and her tender heart was terrified to behold such strange things. The clay which I ate for my own enjoyment became a source of terror for my mother. Why did I eat the clay? Listen.

Verse (Sung)

(Sung by Krishṇa and chorus)

Everyone likes this clay;
The elephant puts it on his head;
In Daṇḍaka forest by this clay the sages
  were turned into milkmaids
And by it Gautam was delivered.

By the dust of Śrī Rāmchandra's feet a stone was made into a woman. When the sages in Danḍaka forest heard that by the dust of the feet of Daśrath's stone, Śrī Rāmchandra a stone would be turned into a woman, these innocents left their *āshrams*, each taking a stone which he hoped would also be turned into a woman. Many of them carefully selected white stones, thinking to receive fair-complexioned women. And those sages who did this became Braj *gopīs* in the next life.

Shout, victory to Bihārī Lāḷ!
Shout, victory to Rādhā and Lord Krishna!

Kīrtan (Sung by chorus and congregation)

Hail Govind, hail Gopāl,
Hail to Rādhā, fariest of all!

End of *rās*[16]

Announcement: Now we are about to present the *śankar līlā*. Lord Sankar is about to appear before you. This *līlā* which is about to be presented is a very beautiful one. In it you will witness the *tandava* dance and hear the poetry of the great saints. Listen attentively; it will begin soon and it will be finished in a short time.

Shout, victory to Lord Śankar!

Śankar Līlā

(Enter Śankar accompanied by two of his devotees made up like clowns. They are made up in white-face and jump and tumble about in a comic manner making strange monkey-like noises. The audience laughs.)

ŚANKAR: O Lord Krishṇa, creator of the universe, sustainer of the faithful, why do you not appear to me in my meditations? It is possible that he is lying in a cradle in Yaśodā's courtyard. Let me go there and see him. (As they go the clowns sing his praises.)

CLOWNS: Hail to Śiva, Lord of Kailās.[17]

(Śankar calls one of the clowns to him. Both clowns hail him.)

ŚANKAR: Today I am going to Braj to see the Lord.

CLOWN: May I also go, my lord?

ŚANKAR: Yes, but you will have to be well-behaved.

CLOWN: (He shouts a salute to Śankar.) Hail to Lord Śiva. (He also makes comic noises like a monkey.)

ŚANKAR: If you shout like that you will frighten Yaśodā, who is very simple-hearted woman, and we will not accomplish our objective.

(Śankar, accompanied by his clowns, circles about the stage, representing the making of a journey. They arrive at Yaśodā's house and announce their presence by calling out. Śankar bids his companions sit down. Śankar sings:)

There is joy abroad in Gokul,
Blessed art thou, blessed art thou.
In Gokul today there is joy without measure,
Therefore, blessed art thou.
Hearing it all the *gopīs* bless thee,
And hearing the *gopīs'* joy others extend
  felicitations.

(Yaśodā comes out of the house, but at the strange noises and the peculiar appearance of the clowns she ducks back in fear.)

ŚANKAR: Mother Yaśodā, please come outside that we may see you.

YAŚODĀ: Holy man, I am willing to come out, but first bind your spirits.

ŚANKAR: All right. (He admonishes his companions to be quiet.) You have shown me great kindness, Mother. May you be blessed.

YAŚODĀ: Sir, sir --

ŚANKAR: Yes, Mother.

YAŚODĀ: Tell me, Holy One, how have I shown kindness to you today?

(Śankar begs Yaśodā for *darśana* of Krishna, but Yaśodā, seeing his appearance, refuses. He insists but Yaśoda does not agree. Then Sankar dances, and then again puts his request, but Yaśodā in no way accedes to it.)

ŚANKAR: Mother, please be at ease. I have some business with you.

YAŚODĀ: How can I be at ease when you are jumping and dancing?

ŚANKAR: Mother, I am very pleased because today I am going to have *darśana*[18] of your little son.

YAŚODĀ: I will not let you see the child. You can have anything else you want, but I will not show you the child.

Poetry

Take whatever you desire,
But be not obstinate in this.
The newborn child I will not show;
He is asleep in his cradle.

ŚANKAR: Mother, there is no harm in my seeing him.

YAŚODĀ: Sir, he is a tiny baby; in his cradle he is swinging.

Poetry

ŚANKAR:
He belongs to every age;
He is the supporter of the whole world.
He is forever free,
And before him the wise abandon their wisdom.
Mother, he compasses the whole world
And never halts;
And though people forget him,
He never forgets them.
He is in every soul
And is the shelter of them that suffer.
He is the one who heals
The agonies of body, mind, and spirit.

ŚANKAR: So, Mother Yaśodā, the child who swings in his cradle in your courtyard, born a cowherder, is verily Brahman, and the Vedas speak of him as beyond description, beyond doubt the Supreme Being. O Mother, in one aspect your son is the originator of the world and the creator of the universe. With the crook of his little finger he saves the world from agony and destruction.

YAŚODĀ: Sir, first tell me, who is my son?

Couplet

ŚANKAR: Mother, your son is the manifestation of
Brahmā, who creates the universe,
Śiva, who accomplishes its dissolution.
And Vishnu, who preserves all created things.
This is he who is Nanda's son.

ŚANKAR: Mother, he, who in the form of Brahmā creates the universe, and in my form causes its destruction, and in the form of Vishnu preserves it, is your son.

YAŚODĀ: What are you saying, sir? My son doesn't destroy anything; he is an innocent child. What do you mean saying my son destroys?

Song

ŚANKAR: That one to whom you gave birth today is
lord of the three worlds.[19]
(Spoken) Mother, the one you speak of as a child is the Lord of the three worlds.

YAŚODĀ: Lord of the three worlds? Sir, my little baby isn't Lord of any three worlds.

(Śankar again asks to see the child, but Yaśodā will not consent.)

ŚANKAR: I will not go without seeing him. (Again he begins to dance, making long still-legged strides around the stage. Then he does a fast pircuette and ends in a statuesque pose. Then he assumes in turn various other statuesque poses. He does a deep back-bend, followed by giant strides around the stage. The dance is slow-paced, timed by the small hand cymbals. He hops on one foot toward each corner of the stage in turn, his posture reminiscent of the Natrāj[20] pose. The dance grows faster as it progresses until it reaches a furious pitch. The spectators cheer him on. A woman goes up from the audience and dances with him, that is, before him. Then she sits and bows at his feet. After, she sits by the musicians and is finally escorted off stage.)

SPECTATORS: Shout, victory to Śankar! Victory to Bholanāth![21]

ŚANKAR: (Stopping his dance.) Mother, please permit me to see the child.

YAŚODĀ: With your leaping and jumping you have ruined my courtyard, and I am too old to repair it.[22]

(Śankar promises to replaster Yaśodā's courtyard, but she, nevertheless, forbids him to enter. Ignoring her refusal, he again and again requests permission to see the child. But Yaśodā, frightened by his fearful appearance, refuses to show the child, but blessing Śankar, tells him to go away.)

ŚANKAR: I was under the impression that you are generous, but you are just the opposite. Am I to go away empty-handed?

YAŚODĀ: No sir. Take whatever you want.

ŚANKAR: What will you give?

YAŚODĀ: Anything you want, sir -- clothing, jewels, diamonds, pearls, gold, silver, money, salt, pepper, tumeric, cummin, dung cakes, firewood, intoxicants --

ŚANKAR: Mother, I do not want any of these.

YAŚODĀ: All right, sir, take this money.

ŚANKAR: Money is sinful, if holy men touch it
  they commit sin.
It leads astray from the guru's path of
  liberation
And creates hardship.
For us *sādhus*[23] to touch money is sin.
It also corrupts knowledge and the spirit
  of renunciation.
It causes one to throb with lust, anger,
  passion, greed, and illusion;
It is the greatest of all malignancies;
  there is none other like it.
Saints, lovers of God, and other such people
Do not make the mistake of touching money.

Couplet

The whole world gives devotion to earthly
  riches,
But no one sings the praises of Mādhava.[24]
The one who ever gives devotion to Mādhava
Will have riches as his handmaid.

Prose Dialogue

Mother, truly if one offers at the feet of your child love, devotion, and faith, then wealth and earthly riches will of themselves follow, but this will happen when --

Poetry

By the grace of one's guru a man becomes
  a true lover and servant of God;
Set your mind on Mādhava and you will be
  set free from greed and anger.

Verse (Spoken)

Either by the grace of your guru[25] or the grace
  of your son,
You can be free from illusion and reach the
  feet of the Lord.
Now you understand what kind of a *sādhu* I am.

YAŚODĀ: What kind of *sādhu* are you, sir?

Poetry

ŚANKAR: If there is a garland in hand but the attention
  is elsewhere,
Tell me what kind of devotion is that?
The *tilak*[26] mark is on the forehead, but in
  the mind only money,
The man upon whom Guru Krishṇa shows mercy.
He is able to practice true devotion.
Nānak is absorbed in Govind
As water mixes with other water.

Prose Dialogue

So, Mother, I am not a money-grabbing *sādhu* who goes about begging two bits from everyone. I am not one of those.

YAŚODĀ: All right, forget about the money; take some flour. At the Jamunā prepare a couple of small cakes and eat them joyously in the name of Nārāyan.[27]

Verse

ŚANKAR: That house which receives a *sādhu* as guest
Shall receive *darśana* as from many pilgrimages.

Prose Dialogue

So Mother, today I have come to your house. It is a woman's duty to treat with respect any *sādhu* or saint who comes to her house. But, Mother, you have not done so.

YAŚODĀ: Sir, I keep saying to you take whatever you want.

ŚANKAR: Just let me have a glimpse of your son. That is what I ask you. Listen, Mother, my guru has instructed me not to leave until I see you son.

YAŚODĀ: And sir, my guru tells me not to let you see my son. How then can I show him to you.

ŚANKAR: Is your guru greater than mine? (Śankar begins again to dance. Again he asks Yaśodā to see her son, and she again refuses.)

ŚANKAR: Mother, I am a very obstinate *sādhu.* I will not leave without seeing him.

YAŚODĀ: I am a Braj milkmaid -- very stubborn. I will do anything else, but I will never allow you to see my son.

Refrain: Here_I sit, hoping for a glimpse
of you, O Śyām.

O son of Nanda, why are you so proud
That you do not heed my thrice-uttered cry?
As much as I desire you to be mine,
Nothing can be accomplished without your
cooperation.
Reveal yourself to me and I shall sing
your praise.
This is my work and also your glory.
I have come like a beggar; drop some gift into
my bowl.
Mohan, may the fame of your house burn
brightly forever.
May your fame increase and my begging bowl
be filled.
Shall we who yearn for a vision of these
depart empty-handed?
O, what can a beggar depend? He has only a
bad reputation.
O Śyām, the pleasant east wind steadily blows
upon your door.

Refrain: Here_I sit, hoping for a glimpse
of you, O Śyām.

Hearing your praises, others sent me.
Please believe that I came because I heard
of your greatness.
Your promise never fails.
Even if I am upright, am I better than you?
If I had given my heart to someone else,
He might have respected the gift.
In order to know the truth, discover it
from someone's fate.
Take today as much as you desire
And if any is left over, take it without
even asking.
Even from the blows of friends, I will not
retreat an inch.
However many hardships there be, I will
take refuge in him.
I am like gold which can be smelted anytime:
I shall confrom myself in whatever way
you wish.
If in the rivers you want to lead me,
Take my hand and I shall follow you.
In whatever state you put me, in that I
shall remain;
This will be my vow as long as I have breath.
I am agreeable to that which is your will;
In every circumstance I shall be content.
The east wind blows continually upon your door;

ŚANKAR: Mother, he is the sustainer of the three
worlds;
In that world all men are equal.
You give the hungry all the food they can eat
And to the thirsty you give water to drink,
But out of fear you refuse to show Gopāl to me.
The one you call a child exists from all ages;
Thousands of worlds pulsate in him
To whom you cling and in whom you feel delight.
Hariganga says this root of humanity,
The measure of whose greatness none can calculate,
You rock to sleep in your bosom.

SPECTATORS: Shout, Victory to Lord Śankar.

(Even though Yaśodā replies many times, Śankar continues to ask her if the baby is her child. Finally in irritation she answers, "No, he is not my child, he is my father.")

ŚANKAR: Mother, he is not yours; he is the father of the three worlds.

YAŚODĀ: Father of the three worlds -- whatever he is -- he is my little boy, swinging in his cradle.

(Again and again she asks Śankar to go away. Although he stubbornly insists on seeing the child, she bluntly refuses.)

ŚANKAR: It doesn't matter, Mother, if you won't let me see him; ten or twenty years from now when he grows up and comes outside to play, then I shall see him.

YAŚODĀ: Do whatever you wish, but I shall not let you see the child.

SANKAR: Mother, haggling has hardened you.

YAŚODĀ: Yes, I have been hardened by haggling. I won't let you see him.

Song

SANKAR: Here I sit hoping for a glimpse of you, O Śyām;
Without a glimpse of you I shall not leave
your door.
Silently I sit, I do not know for how long;
Nor do I know how long I shall have to endure.
He who gives will not want for anything.
Why do you delay? Śyām, I wait at your door.

Refrain: Here_I sit, hoping for a glimpse
of you, O Śyām.

You saved Dhruva, giving him a fixed position;
You received bruises on your feet in saving
Mrgath;
To achieve salvation Mordvaj was cut with
a saw;
Harishchandra got salvation, but he had to
drink the cup of sorrow.
On the day that a man offers devotion you
give him salvation as a gift.
All these examples show that salvation is
your business.
If you cannot save me then you ought to
change your name.
Whoever is saved without devotion will be
yours in time.
The east wind blows upon your door;

Refrain: Here_I sit, hoping for a glimpse
of you, O Śyām.

The memory of you, Śyām, lies hidden in my heart;
Tears start to flow from my eyes, but I hold
them back.
I fear that hope also will flow out of my heart.
May your memory never be erased from my heart;
That memory cannot be washed away by tears.
My heart is not such, beloved, that it could
forget you.
I am made with love, what can I do?
Even if I should be destroyed, that memory
can never be.
Those who love you have raised you on high;
You have exalted the pride of the devoted.
Who knows what hardships you have suffered in
saving the fallen?
After how many hardships has this devotee come?
If you do not save me, I shall suffer calamity.
Put up this sign: your loving devotion is false.
The east wind blows upon your door;

Refrain: Here_I sit, hoping for a glimpse
of you, O Śyām.

O Śyām, if you do not save me, in the future
judgment,
Through an advocate, I shall bring suit
against you.

Ghanśyām, you have promised to save me;
Now I am claiming that promise.
Now in response will you prove me sinful?
I shall place thousands of examples of
  sinners before you.
If after all that you still do not save me,
I shall throw myself down at your door,
  O treasury of mercy.

Prose Dialogue

ŚANKAR: Have pity, Mother. How long have I been sitting and calling at your door while you sit inside?

(Yaśodā comes outside and tells him to go away, that she will not consent, for him to see the child. Finally Sankar, playing his *damarū*[28] starts on his way. Then Krishṇa begins to cry at the top of his voice; he also refuses to nurse. A friend of Yaśodā asks if anyone has come by who might have put the evil eye on the child. Yaśodā tells her that a holy man who was here has just gone away. Then the friend runs after the holy man to call him back; she offers him a refreshing drink [*bhāng*]. Śankar replies that he will prepare and drink his own *bhāng*. The friend urges him to come back, telling him that Yaśodā will now show him her son. Śankar, haste and with great joy, returns to Yaśodā's door. She leads him inside.)[29]

Verse (Sung)[30]

Śankar, in haste and joy returns to Yaśodā's door.

ŚANKAR: Mother, are you no longer afraid?

YAŚODĀ: No, sir, what should I fear of a man of such great holiness?

ŚANKAR: Mother, up to now you have been afraid of me and I of you.

YAŚODĀ: No, sir, don't say that. Since you left, sir, my precious baby has not stopped crying.

(Yaśodā takes Śankar to see Krishṇa. As soon as Śankar enters Krishṇa stops crying.)

YAŚODĀ: Sir, you must stay here in Nadgāōn.

ŚANKAR: I live in Nadgāon̄.

YAŚODĀ: You don't live in Nandgaon̄; I have never seen you. Sir, please give me some king of medicinal herb that he may never again be subject to the evil eye. Then you may see him.

(Śankar gives Yaśodā the blessing of an enduring affection. Then she shows him the child. Sankar takes the baby in his arms and is satisfied.)

CHORUS AND SPECTATORS: Shout, Victory to Vrindāban Bihārī Lāl!

FOOTNOTES

1. Where performances are held in places other than a standard *rās mandal* the musicians may be seated right or left of the playing area.

2. The sermon is a fairly recent innovation, and its place in the *Nitya Ras* is not as fixed as other items. It is often placed just after the intermission.

3. Spectators come forward to make offerings during the performance also, but not in such large numbers as at the time of the final tableau.

4. An honorific title commonly attached to names of persons, holy things, and holy places.

5. Brahmā, Vishnu and Śankar (Śiva) form the Hindu triad of creator, preserver and destroyer.

6. The Cloud-dark One, as epithet for Krishṇa.

7. Sporting Son of Vrindāban, an epithet for Krishṇa.

8. An epithet for Krishṇa.

9. Rādhā.

10. The Indian red-legged partridge, fabled to subsist on moonbeams.

11. Swinging has a romantic connotation. It is especially associated with the festival of Tīj, which falls on the third day of the lunar fortnight of the month of Srāvan. Clouds are a symbol of passion.

12. The tree *neulea orientalis.*

13. An Indian bird.

14. The poet's signature, indicating that this poem is a composition of Sūrdas, whose name is that of a bird.

15. Another name for Krishṇa.

16. The *rās* ended here, the *svāmī* having, at his discretion, placed the Sermon at the end rather than at the beginning of the second part.

17. The abode of Śiva is Mount Kailās.

18. The privilege of seeing, in an image or a person or in a vision, a deity or other object of worship or devotion.

19. Meaning the entire universe.

20. Śiva is pictured dancing in a circle of fire. One foot is planted on a dwarf, the symbol of ignorance and the other is upraised.

21. Śiva.

22. Indian village courtyards and floors are plastered with a solution made with cowdung. It dries hard and smooth, but the surface would break under vigorous dancing.

23. An Indian holy man, an ascetic.

24. Krishṇa.

25. Teacher, religious preceptor.

26. An ornamental mark of colored paste worn on the forehead.

27. Vishnu.

28. The *damarū* is a small two-headed drum shaped like an hour-glass. It is one of Siva's symbols.

29. This section is summarized because the exact lines of the dialogue are not clear due to the overlapping of the actors' speeches.

30. From here to end dialogue is interspersed with occasional lines of narrative cantillation.

Sri Ram V. Bakshi

KALIDASA'S PLAYS: RITUALS OF HUMAN PERFECTION

Kalidasa, the most renowned of classical Indian playwrights, is believed to have written only three plays: *Malavikagnimitra*, *Vikramorvasiya*, and *Shakuntala*, in addition to several long poems. Though scholars have differing opinions regarding his religious beliefs, it is possible that he was a devotee of Lord Siva, for all of his plays start with an invocation to Siva.[1] Whatever god Kalidasa propitiated, however, the main concern here is to study the rituals and ritualistic elements used by Kalidasa in his plays.

Kalidasa exhibited a great enthusiasm for rituals,[2] the most important of which is the *yajna* (ritual or sacrifice) performed, according to Hindu belief, to attain or arrive at a "certain required state of discipline for the proper human conduct which expresses itself as a *dharma*."[3] Kalidasa used the *yajna* and other similar sacrifices primarily to motivate the transformation in his characters as well as a dramatic device to develop his plots. In view of this fact, each play of Kalidasa assumes the form of a ritual because of its structure, design, and purpose. Furthermore, the performance of rituals on the stage provides an esthetic as well as religious experience to the spectators who, as a result of witnessing the performance, are inspired to approve the action of the characters and assert their belief in man's nobility.

Kalidasa seems to emulate Bharata, who instructed in the *Natyasastra* that theatrical performance should be regarded as a kind of religious worship. Similarly, Kalidasa has Ganadasa, the dance teacher in *Malavikagnimitra*, reiterate this dictum, "Sages look upon this [theatre] as a sacrifice that is pleasant to the eyes of the gods."[4]

Kalidasa's first play, *Malavikagnimitra*, is like a ritual which transforms the society into an ideal universe, devoid of pride and jealousy, and governed by *dharma*, the principle of right action.[5] In this play, King Agnimitra loves Malavika, who is serving his wife Queen Dharini in the guise of a maid. Before Dharini agrees to the marriage and accepts Malavika into the harem as a queen, she performs a ritual to test whether Malavika belongs to a royal family. This is the important ritual called *dohada* in which a woman touches a tree with her foot. It is believed that if the woman is of noble birth, the tree blossoms. Therefore, Dharini chooses Malavika to perform the *dohada* ceremony and promises that if the tree blooms she will grant a favor to Malavika. This ceremony takes the significance of the ritual of acceptance. Before a person is accepted into a society, he must first undergo certain tests to prove his virtue. Similarly, the *dohada* ceremony serves as a test for Malavika to prove her noble birth before she is accepted into the harem as a queen.

Another ceremony symbolizing the ritual of reconciliation is presented in this play. Upon the realization that Agnimitra's happiness lies in his marriage to Malavika, Dharini acts according to *dharma* by reconciling herself to the wishes of her husband, the king, and consenting to his marriage with Malavika. After the *dohada* ceremony in which Malavika touches the *asoka* tree with her foot, the tree blooms; whereupon Dharini orders that an altar be made around the tree and that Malavika be brought there dressed in bridal attire. Under the tree a ritual takes place in which Dharini relinquishes her place to Malavika as the wife. Dharini's voluntary withdrawal from her husband's life is important here.

The last scene of Act V of *Malavikagnimitra* signifies the ritual of extinction. The irreconcilable elements from individuals and the society are extricated at the end of the play. The Queen Dharini is reconciled with Agnimitra and Malavika; the Yuvanas who have caught the sacrificial horse are defeated by Vasumitra; the King of Vidarbha is defeated by the commander, Virasena; even Pusyamitra, who has been angry with Agnimitra for some time, invites him to attend the *yajna* with his wife. All the conflicts are resolved; understanding and harmony prevail upon the society. The only element of discord is Iravati, the second wife of Agnimitra, who is not present on the stage in the final scene, though she sends her consent to the marriage of Malavika and Agnimitra. Because in the last scene the society on the stage is a purified one, the absence of Iravati implies that she has been extricated from the society. Kalidasa uses this character as a scape-goat personifying a jealous, proud and for the most part irreconcilable woman. Iravati is the very antithesis of Dharini.

As has been pointed out earlier, the whole play *Malavikagnimitra* is a symbolic ritual which transforms the society by eradicating all discordant elements.

Kalidasa's second play, *Vikramorvasiya*, is the symbolic representation of the ritual of reconciliation. At the end of this play, there is reconciliation not only among the human beings, but also between the gods and the human beings.

The action in the earlier part of the play involves the love affair between Pururvasa and the celestial dancer Urvasi, and the ritual *vatasavitrivrata* performed by Queen Ausinari. The importance of this ritual is explained in *Skanda Purana*,[6] and the maid Nipunika describes it in Act III as the ritual of "the conciliation of the beloved."[7] Ausinari invites her husband, Pururvasa, to the crystal pavilion where she worships him and the moon. In this ritual, "Ausinari relinquishes her jealousy and pride, and also sacrifices a part of her right over her husband."[8] This action proves the moral strength of Ausinari, who voluntarily withdraws and relinquishes her right over her husband, after the inner realization of the truth that her husband loves Urvasi. This ceremony signifies Ausinari's withdrawal from the king's life, and also serves as a ritual of acceptance because Ausinari accepts Urvasi into the harem. This change is visually indicated in the costumes of these characters: Ausinari, dressed in white clothes, becomes an ascetic, whereas Urvasi, dressed in colorful clothes as an *abhisarika*,[9] symbolizes a bride.

The tragic separation of Urvasi and Pururvasa in the later part of the play can be regarded as a ritual of suffering. When strolling in Gandhamadana grove, Pururvasa stares at a beautiful girl, Udayavati, playing on the banks of Mandakini.

Offended by his indecent behavior, Urvasi runs into a sacred grove forbidden to women under pain of a curse, and is transformed into a vine. Pururvasa searches for her everywhere, inquiring of her whereabouts from the trees and birds. He continues his search until he finds the *sangamaniya* jewel which helps him recover Urvasi. During the period of separation, both Pururvasa and Urvasi suffer. In pursuit of Urvasi, Pururvasa becomes restless and desperate, and Urvasi, invisible to Pururvasa in the form of a vine, observes his despair helplessly. As a result of this suffering, Pururvasa and Urvasi are changed: there is more understanding between them, especially in Urvasi who becomes more tolerant. The moral implied in this ritual is that wisdom comes through suffering.

Another ritualistic element can be perceived in *Vikramorvasiya* when Pururvasa, Urvasi, and their son, Ayus, are faced with a situation involving the conflict of love and duty. In the earlier part of the play when Urvasi errs in her performance, Bharata enraged by anger curses and commits her to the world. Upon Urvasi's request, Indra modifies the curse: she can remain on the earth with her beloved, but she must return to heaven when Pururvasa sees their son. Because Pururvasa sees his son Ayus in the scene, Urvasi has to return to the heaven. To preserve her honor and obey the call of duty, Urvasi decides to go to heaven, leaving her husband and son. For the same reason, Pururvasa agrees to Urvasi's departure and decides to hand over his throne to Ayus and retire into the forest. Similarly, Ayus does not show eagerness to ascend the throne. Though Urvasi's departure creates a sad situation, the three characters are prepared to renounce their happiness and endure suffering in order to preserve their *dharma*. Pleased with the virtue and honesty of these people, Indra decides to retract the curse and restore happiness to them. He sends a message with Narada that Urvasi can remain on the earth with her family forever. This segment of the plot can be considered as a ritual in which divine and human elements are reconciled. Narada's message that "Indra will work your good, and you too will act according to his wishes,"[10] typifies Kalidasa's philosophy: the need for a harmonious relationship between man and God. This idea is reflected in the plot which presents the love between Pururvasa, a mortal, and Urvasi, a celestial nymph.

The final scene of *Vikramorvasiya*, in which the coronation of Ayus takes place, is a spectacular ritualistic scene demonstrating Kalidasa's belief in the king as a divine ruler. Nymphs descend from heaven bearing material for the ceremony, and Narada himself descends to crown the Prince. In their adoration of the prince, the bards -- acting as Kalidasa' mouth-pieces -- attest to the divine sanctity of the royal throne.

As stated earlier, *Vilramorvasiya* exemplifies the ritual of reconciliation because at the conclusion of the play opposing elements are reconciled, and mutual understanding between gods and human beings is reaffirmed. The benediction spoken by Pururvasa at the end of the play emphasizes the unity of two opposing elements -- learning and wealth -- to bring prosperity and welfare to the people.

The third play, *Shakuntala*, illustrating the unity of faith, action, and fortune which leads human beings to perfection and happiness, embodies the ritual of penance. Shakuntala represents faith, Dushyanta signifies action, and their son, Sarvadamana, symbolizes fortune. Shakuntala has tremendous confidence in herself and in the virtue of others. Her ardent faith in love and understanding is the main reason for her reunion with Dushyanta. Dushyanta represents the profound spiritual strength which drives a person to righteous action. In Act VI, while he grieves for Shakuntala, he undertakes a war against the demons to comply with Indra's request. He always obeys the laws of *dharma*. Their son, Sarvadamana, assumes the role of fortune or success because he brings about the reunion of Shakuntala and Dushyanta. Therefore, this reunion at the conclusion of the play points out the important philosophy that by having faith in virtue and acting according to *dharma*, happiness can be achieved in life.

Act IV of *Shakuntala* contains the well delineated bridal ritual in which Kanva prepares to send Shakuntala to her husband Dushyanta. Shakuntala's bridal attire, Kanva's advice to her regarding her behavior in the palace, and her departure from the forest are similar to the contemporary ceremony performed when a bride is being sent to the bridegroom's house after the marriage. This scene is so well written that it still evokes tremendous emotions in the spectators, besides providing esthetic pleasure. The scene has impressed even European scholars, among them Walter Ruben, who considers it "the finest gem in Kalidasa's art. . . infinitely moving, with its heart-rending farewell. For in Europe, too, the bride leaves her home with tears, a custom which is dying out, however."[11]

Shankuntala's disappearance from the world when rejected by Dushyanta denotes a scapegoat ritual. Shakuntala is shown as a victim of the unknown and mysterious powers which govern the lives of the people. She has been used as a scapegoat to personify humanity as a whole which is subjected to the Grand Mechanism[12] of this universe, and her disappearance implies her death. Before the end of the play, Dushyanta finds Shakuntala signifying that she has been resurrected by Dushyanta. Therefore, her disappearance and her reunion with Dushyanta can be regarded as a ritual of death and resurrection.

Even the role played by the fish in recovering Dushyanta's ring has mythical significance. For his first incarnation, God (Vishnu) took the form of a fish to save this world from deluge and chaos.[13] In the same way, the fish saves the ring and sacrifices itself to restore Dushyanta's memory of Shakuntala.

Dushyanta's war against the demons in compliance with Indra's request manifests itself as a worship. Even though afflicted by sorrow brought about by separation from Shakuntala, he readily obeys Indra giving precedence to duty over love, responsibility to divine obligations over personal ends. In all of his plays, Kalidasa presents the moral that man has to do the right action according to *dharma*. This emphasizes the need of harmonious relationship between the gods and human beings, and this is reaffirmed by Marica's preaching in the last scene: "Gods with their blessings should provide happiness for men, and, in turn, human beings should please the gods by their devotion and right action."[14]

The final goal of life, as described in the benediction of the play, is *moksha* (eternal bliss) and escape from the cycle of birth.[15] In demonstrating people's faith and virtuous actions to achieve this aim, the play *Shakuntala* takes the form of a ritual enlightening the fact that both action and faith are necessary to derive happiness in this life, and the fulfillment of life leads to the attainment of eternal bliss.

FOOTNOTES

1. R.D. Trivedi, "Forms of Siva in Kalidasa," *Journal of Indian History*, 44, 2 (August 1966), p. 429.

2. S.A. Sabnis, *Kalidasa: His Style and His Times* (Bombay, 1966), p. 202.

3. Dimbeswar Sharma, *An Interpretative Study of Kalidasa* (Calcutta, 1968), p. 39.

4. C.R. Deodhar, *Dramas of Kalidasa: Malavikagnimitra* (Delhi, 1966), Act I, Verse 4, p. 9.

5. Sri Ram V. Bakshi, "Kalidasa: A New Interpretation," Ph.D. diss., Kansas, 1970, p. 93.

6. D.G. Koparkar, "Time Analysis in *Vikramorvasiya*,"Act III, *Oriental Thought*, 2, 2-3 (April-July 1956), pp. 143-149.

7. Deodhar, *Dramas of Kalidasa: Vikramorvasiya* (Delhi, 1966), Act III, p. 87.

8. Bakshi, p. 119.

9. A lady who dresses and decorates herself amorously for the purpose of meeting her lover.

10. Deodhar, *Dramas of Kalidasa: Vikramorvasiya*, Act V, Verse 20, p. 155.

11. Walter Ruben, *Kalidasa: The Human Meaning of His Works*, tr. Joan Becker (Berlin, 1957), p. 54.

12. This word is used here to connote machinations of the universe which control the course of life.

13. Jessie L. Weston, *From Ritual to Romance* (New York, 1957), p. 126.

14. Bakshi, pp. 213-214.

15. Deodhar, *Dramas of Kalidasa: Sakuntala* (Delhi, 1966), Act VIII, Verse 35, p. 247.

Asaita Thakar

VANIO AND *ZANDA ZULAN*

Bhavai plays of Gujarat
adapted by Farley
Richmond and Tevia
Abrams from a transla-
tion by Harish Trivedi

Introduction by Farley Richmond[1]

The Playwright

Vanio and *Zanda Zulan* are excellent examples of Bhavai, the folk theatre of Gujarat.[2] Both plays, indeed the entire repertory of Bhavai (approximately 360 plays), are ascribed to Asaita Thakar, an outcaste Brahmin who lived during the middle of the fourteenth century. According to a popular legend told among the players, Asaita has the distinction of being the father of Bhavai, as well as the progenitor of the professional actors of Gujarat.

The story goes that he was born among the lower echelons of the Brahmin caste and served as the family priest of Patel Hema, headman of Unza, a small village in northern Gujarat. When Hema's daughter Ganga was abducted by a Muslim captain who had an eye for a pretty face, Asaita unhesitatingly went to her rescue out of respect for his friend. At first he sought an audience with the captain on the pretext of entertaining him with a dazzling array of songs. After winning the captain's praise, Asaita requested that Ganga be released because she was his only daughter. Suspecting that Asaita was lying, the Muslim captain consented to do so on one condition, that Asaita dine with Ganga in his presence. The shrewd captain knew that Brahmins were forbidden to dine with lower caste Hindus; indeed, it was considered an unpardonable sin. Much to the captain's surprise Asaita readily agreed. After fulfilling his part of the bargain, Asaita returned to Unza with Ganga trailing safely behind him. Upon his return Asaita was paid for his trouble by being promptly excommunicated from the Brahmin caste. In medieval India this was a fate worse than death. It meant that Asaita could no longer practice his traditional profession. A lesser man would surely have been ruined by this sudden reversal of fortune, but Asaita accepted his fate with resignation and turned his attention to the lowly occupation of singing and dancing for a living. With his sons and the help of other outcaste Brahmins, he formed the first company of strolling players in Gujarat, the *bhavaiyas*, those of three castes. Many well-known stage actors in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Bombay were members of the *targala* community. The caste still reserves the hereditary right to perform Bhavai.

In gratitude for the safe return of his daughter, Patel Hema bestowed on Asaita a small gift of land and financial support, thereby initiating a pattern of village patronage of *bhavaiyas* which persists to the present day.

The Plays

Bhavai is traditionally performed in connection with Hindu religious festivals or whenever the farming community is free from agricultural responsibilities. The contents of most of the plays center on the vices and follies of the members of various communities of village society. The Brahmin, the tailor, the potter, the scavenger, the moneylender -- all are delightfully and mercilessly satirized in Bhavai. A few of the plays deal with mythological themes, particularly those drawn from the *Ramayana*. Other plays provide vignettes of famous historical personages of the region, but even the mythological and historical plays have an abundance of satire in them and an inevitable didactic message.

Hasya (comedy) is the dominant *rasa* (sentiment) in Bhavai, although the other eight *rasas* are integrated into many of the plots. The predominace of *hasya*, however, makes Bhavai unique in the catalogue of traditional Indian theatre.

Vanio is a typical example of the level of humor to which Bhavai descends. It is more akin to farce in Western drama than it is to comedy. Although this play contains no obscenities, other plays of the repertory use obscene remarks and gestures in abundance. To the villagers, particularly to the male segment of the audience, obscenities are quite acceptable, merely part of the fun. Several puritanical "reformers" of the late nineteenth century chose to expunge these materials in their abridged editions of the plays. The pity is they seem to have succeeded in having the desired effect. Today this important aspect of Bhavai's humor is all but lost to us.

Vanio was not performed very frequently during this century primarily because Mahatma Gandhi was a member of the Bania community which the play freely satirizes. Considerable social pressure was brought to bear on the players, particularly during the freedom movement, to drop it from their repertory.

Zanda Zulan, written to be played either immediately after *Vanio* or as a separate piece, stands as one of the finest examples of the Bhavai repertory. The play mingles *hasya rasa* and *sringara rasa* (the erotic sentiment) in liberal doses and strangely evokes *karuna rasa* (the sentiment of pathos) by the unexpected twist at the end of the play.

This play more nearly resembles Western drama than do most of the others of the Bhavai repertory because it has a plot, however slim, and several characters who are pitted in a dramatic conflict of wills. Below its surface, the play has a deep allegorical significance. Tejo Vanio represents material wealth. Teji, his wife, is the embodiment of Lakshmi, goddess of wealth. She also represents *jivatma*, the lesser soul, which longs for union with *paramatma*, the greater soul, or gods personified by Zanda Zulan. The struggle between these forces is a rural version of the struggle of the Brahmin wives, who chose to love and worship Lord Krishna at the risk of arousing their husbands' scorn.

On yet another level, *Zanda Zulan* deals with a sensitive social issue, the relationship between Hindus and Muslims. Fortunately, despite the tensions of recent years, one may still see this remarkable play in remote villages in the interior of Gujarat. The following adaptations were made from performances of both plays seen at Palodar village in Mehsana District in December 1969.

About the translations and adaptations

The translations of *Vanio* and *Zanda Zulan*, along with a dozen other Bhavai scripts, were begun in 1968[3] as part of an extensive project to make available to Western readers excellent examples of the rich dramatic literature of India's village theatre. For us it was not enough just to open the Pandora's box by providing readable translations; we selected plays that could be staged outside of India; at the same time, we made sure that they were authentic examples of the preoccupations of villagers in Gujarat. The fact that the works ascribed to Asaita Thakar have been performed in Gujarat since the fourteenth century was adequate proof that they were viable stage pieces and that they were an acceptable form of entertainment among the village audiences.

To achieve our aims it was necessary to take some liberties with the original scripts to make the translations understandable to Western audiences and to westernized Indian audiences. Therefore, we chose to call our efforts "adaptations" rather than "translations." Much of the confusion in the original works were eliminated. For example, time is handled without regard for its normal chronological sequence. Characters frequently jump back and forth between past events and present realities without adequately preparing the audience in advance. From all indications this is a perfectly acceptable convention in Bhavai, which does not trouble Gujarati audiences. However, it is disconcerting to Western readers who are used to a different ordering of events in time. We have taken the liberty of sorting out the confusions in the time sequences of the plays illustrated below.

Other features of Bhavai which are modified in our adaptations are the elaborate metrical and rhythmic schemes of the dialogue and poetic passages of the plays. In Bhavai, at least fifteen metres based on Sanskrit models and four common to folk literature are used in the compositions. In addition, the Muslim characters, among the most important of which is Zanda, often recite their lines in the uniquely rhythmic patterns of *gazals* and *rekhtas*. We were bewildered by the richness and intricacy of the language used in these plays, particularly when we could find no English equivalents to recreate the original sound patterns and rhythms. For the most part we have simply adopted a uniform prose style in our adaptations, which attempts to retain the meaning of the original passages.

At times we have inserted bits and pieces of dialogue to make references easier to understand and to expand the humor. In the original version of *Vanio*, for example, Tejo tells the entire story of his ridiculous journey to his father-in-law's house himself, prompted only by the questions of the Naik. In our version, we have broken up his long monologue by establishing a convention whereby part of his journey is enacted by characters which he meets along the way. Zanda's prayers are considerably edited to give them focus, especially for the benefit of readers not familiar with the finer points of Indian philosophy. In this regard, it should be remembered that Zanda is usually played by a Hindu actor portraying a Muslim character who makes broad generalizations about Islam and Hinduism. What he has to say seems to be a rural interpretation of the code of moral conduct appropriate to all villagers, regardless of their caste or religion.

In every instance, our goal has been to simplify and clarify the plays without sacrificing their original flavor. Fortunately, we have a precedent in the common practice of the Bhavai actors who cut down or expand the story during a performance to suit the taste of the particular audience before whom they play. The text is not considered sacrosanct. It is nothing more than a scenario around which a performance is built. It is common knowledge that the players usually arrive at a village in time to pick up the latest local gossip to weave into the fabric of their narrative. In this way they make timely the fourteenth-century plays.

Unfortunately, printed words can never do justice to the lively atmosphere of an actual performance in an Indian village. Music, song, and dance are indispensible ingredients in Bhavai which are not easily described in print. The *ragas* and *talas* used in the songs and dances correspond to the Hindustani school of music, with a unique regional flavor all their own. In her comprehensive study, Sudha Desai lists twenty-two different *ragas* and ten *talas* still in use. The dance steps, particularly those used by the female characters, resemble the Kathak of North India. Each character has his own particular entrance music and dance which corresponds to the *dhruvas* (entrance songs) and *darus* (entrance dances) of more classical forms of Indian theatre, such as Kathakali and Kuchipudi.

Costumes

The term *vesha* in Gujarati refers to the costume and the behavior of the person who wears it. Therefore, *Tejo Vanio No Vesha*, the Gujarati title of the first play in this collection, refers to the costume and the eccentric mannerisms of Tejo, the title role. *Zanda Zulan No Vesha* implies a similar reference to the costume and mannerisms of the title role, Zanda. And so it goes, on and on throughout the whole canon of the Bhavai repertory. Obviously, then, the costumes of Bhavai have conventional colors, patterns, shapes and textures which are always associated with a particular character and with no one else. Only minor variations occur between the conventional costumes for the same roles in companies of different regions of Gujarat. The central characters in the two plays included here normally wear the following dress:

Tejo Vanio wears a *dhoti* wrapped in the Gujarati style with a white *kurta* shirt. In some regions he wears a scarf tied around his waist. In other regions the scarf hangs loosely around his neck. In some parts of the country he wears padded hips and stomach, similar to those worn by the Brahmin described in the preliminaries below. On Tejo's head is a soft red cap which is flat in the front and conical shaped at the rear. He sports a mustache which droops on both ends to typify the meek and cowardly characters associated with the Bania community. In some regions he wears a mustache one side of which is turned up and the other side of which is turned down to suggest his inconsistent behavior. I might add, parenthetically, that the Vidushaka, or jester in Kutiyattam of Kerala, one of the oldest forms of traditional theatre in India, also wears his mustache in the latter style.

Teji is dressed in a fully pleated, bright-blue *ghaghra* skirt, a yellow *choli* blouse and a red *odhani*, or veil, with a golden border. She is bedecked with ornaments, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, finger rings and bangles.

Zanda Zulan is dressed in *payjamas*, pants which fit tightly around the lower leg and blouse out at the hips. Over these he wears an ankle-length, dark blue, fully pleated skirt. His coat is a dark green *angarkhun*, a knee-length tail-coat squared off at the bottom and tightly fitted at the torso and sleeves. Today the coat is usually made of satin rather than a traditional cotton fabric. On his head he wears a conical-shaped hat rounded at the base and pointed at the top. It reminds me of that worn by the Wicked Witch of the North in the movie version of *The Wizard of Oz*. Multi-colored strips of cloth cascade from the point of the cap. Fastened under the cap are long, black strands of yarn which hang to Zanda's knees to represent his hair. He wears a necklace of large white pearls and green beads. Shining ornaments are fastened to the tops of his ears. His face is painted white. His eyebrows are shaped in high, black arches and his eyelashes are elongated. He wears a black beard and short mustache.

Preliminaries

Like other forms of traditional theatre in India, Bhavai is played outdoors, either in front of a temple or in a village *chowk*. The spectators are drawn to the playing area after their evening meals by *garbas* sung in unison by the musicians and the villagers. About 10 p.m. the preliminaries begin.

The Naik (company and stagemanager) inscribes a large circle of castor oil on the playing area. This act is meant to drive away evil spirits and to sanctify the acting area. Then he applies *kumkum* (red powder) on a torch which is traditionally held by the village barber. The torchlight symbolizes the presence of Ambamata, the mother goddess of the Gujarati people and one of the chief manifestations of *shakti*. It is faithfully fed and kept burning throughout every performance of Bhavai, even when electric lights are used for illumination. The Naik sprinkles flowers and *kunkur* over the playing area, on the musical instruments and among the spectators. Before leaving the arena, he involkes Ambamata and Baucharaji (another manifestation of *shakti* and the patron saint of the *bhavaiyas*).

The preliminaries continue with a musical concert. The instruments most commonly used in Bhavai are *bhungals*, a *dholak* or *tablas*, small cymbals and a harmonium. The *bhungals* are four-foot long copper pipes which provide a forceful cadence during the dance sequences and serve to signal the entrance of important characters. Normally two *bhungals* are used. They are thought to be a matched pair, male and female in gender. On occasion various other musical instruments are used for special effects.

When the spectators have gathered and the important guests have been seated, prayers to Ambaji commence. These are followed by a few songs describing the love affair of a famous couple from Marwad, Rajasthan, perhaps the original home of Bhavai. The songs serve to cue the Naik who enters the arena once more and begins the Ganapati rituals, appropriately called *ganapati no vesha* (The Costume/Character of Ganapati). On a cue from the musicians, an actor dressed to represent Ganapati, the elephant-headed god of beginnings and success, enters holding a brass plate before his face. A swastika is painted on the bottom of the tray. As he dances, the musicians sing his praise. After Ganapati exits another actor impersonating the goddess Kali enters. The Naik questions her as to her name and business but gets nothing more than monosyllables in reply. Kali dances in a frenzy to songs sung loudly in praise of her. At the end of the dance, all the musicians implore her to remove all impediments that might hinder their performance, which she symbolically does by forming a circle over their heads and cracking her knuckles on her temples.

To conclude the preliminaries, an actor dressed as a Brahmin priest comes from the dressing room through the crowd of spectators that circle the arena. He provides the first bit of humor in the show. When questioned by the Naik as to his name and business, he replies in a ridiculous manner using all kinds of obscenities to delight the spectators. His costume is a caricature of that of a Brahmin. Sometimes the actor portraying the role wears small clay pots on his stomach and his hips which are concealed under the folds of his costume. His appearance is so grotesque that when he dances his movements are the antithesis of grace. After his antics, which may continue as long as the actor has wit enough to hold the audiences' attention, the Ganapati preliminaries are concluded by a song. Only then do the regular stories begin.

NOTES

1. The introductory remarks and translations are a revision of the original material published under the same title in 1971 by Writers Workshop of Calcutta.

2. Relatively little has been written about Bhavai. Among the more important works are: Sudha Desai, "Bhavai: The Folk Drama of Gujarat," *Natya* (New Delhi) Folk Theatre Number, 6,4, (1962), pp. 35-45. Miss Desai is also the author of a definitive book on Bhavai, which is shortly to be published by Bombay University. The contents of her article are drawn from her Ph.D. thesis entitled, "Bhavai: A Medieval Form of Ancient Indian Dramatic Art (*Natya*) as Prevalent in Gujarat," Bombay University, 1955; Dina Gandhi, "Bhavai: The Gujerati Folk Drama," an unpublished paper delivered at the Sangeet Natak Akademi Seminar on Drama held in New Delhi in the early 60's, pp. 103-123; Balwant Gargi, *Folk Theater of India* (Seattle, 1966), pp. 51-71; and, Farley P. Richmond, "Bhavai: Village Theatre of West India," *Papers in International and World Affairs* (East Lansing, Michigan), 2 (April 1969), 13-25. In Gujarati many interesting papers and extracts from books have been written on the subject of Bhavai but the most important materials are *Bhavai Sangraha* and *Bhavai-No Bhomiyo*, both collections of Bhavai plays transcribed from actual performances in the late nineteenth century by Mahipatram Nilakanth. Both volumes are published in Ahmedabad.

3. The translations were made possible by the generous support and encouragement of the Asian Studies Center, the International Communication Institute and the Department of Theatre, Michigan State University. All-University Research Funds helped in typing the manuscripts.

VANIO

(After the preliminary rituals and *Ganpati No Vesha,* the Naik steps forward and does a *namaskara* to the spectators.)

NAIK: Learned laides and gentlemen, I am pleased to welcome you here tonight to witness our show. Before we begin, let me tell you that --

(A loud voice singing off key from behind the acting area interrupts the Naik)

Ah, here comes that old fool, Tejo. He's bound to give us a laugh. I'll play a trick on him. (Confidentially.) Now, pretend you don't know who he is. (To Tejo.) Hey, you there! Stop!

TEJO: Who, me?

NAIK: Yes, you! What are you doing here?

TEJO: I work here. (Whispering to the Naik .) Don't you remember, I'm your best actor.

NAIK: Never saw you before.

TEJO: But --

NAIK: I'm the director of this company and I said I never saw you before.

TEJO: But surely you recognize me. (The Naik makes no response. Tejo turns to audience to plead his case.) You've seen me before, haven't you? (Naturally the actor may improvise dialogue to any suitable length at this point.)

NAIK: (Finally.) Quiet! Stand at attention, old man! What's your name? (Tejo is silent.) You have a name, haven't you?

TEJO: Yes, that is --

NAIK: Well? We're waiting.

TEJO: Do you want my stage name or my real name?

NAIK: What do people call you?

TEJO: People call me all sorts of things. My mother calls me one thing and my auntie, bless her, calls me another and --

NAIK: All right. What does your mother call you?

TEJO: Theekari Parekh.

NAIK: What?

TEJO: Theekari Parekh. (To spectators.) I see by your faces you don't understand either. Well, let me explain. In Gujarat; *theekari* means a piece of broken pottery. And Parekh is the title of a professional appraiser. Put them together and what have you got? (Pause.)

NAIK: We can't guess.

TEJO: An expert in the identification of broken pots! When I walk down the streets of my village, I can tell at a glance whether a broken fragment comes from a pitcher or a pot. I can even tell who it belongs to, what the fellow does for a living, his age, the name of his wife and how many children he has. Theekari Parekh! That's what my mother calls me. But my auntie, bless her --

NAIK: She's got another name for you.

TEJO: You're perceptive. Auntie calls me Napalo, because whenever I borrow something, I never return it.

NAIK: They say names are revealing.

TEJO: Oh, I've got more. Dozens! (Counting on his fingers.) There's Murkho --

NAIK: Meaning "fool!"

TEJO: Then there's Aadvo --

NAIK: That makes you an idiot as well as a fool.

TEJO: People used to think so when I was young. But today I'm wiser. That's why they call me Tejo.

NAIK: I don't think these people understand what Tejo means.

TEJO: (To spectators) That's simple -- one who smiles. You see, I'm a Hindu, born into the Bania community. All Banias are rich merchants. Because we're so rich, people say we're always smiling.

NAIK: Tejo Vanio, the smiling merchant. Well, that's a more respectable name than "idiot" or "fool." But tell me, [how did you get this name?]

TEJO: Do you really want to know?

NAIK: Ask the spectators? Perhaps they want to see you make an ass of yourself.

TEJO: (Addressing the audience.) Do you want to know why people call me Tejo Vanio? (Again a clever actor may improvise at his discretion.) Well then, let me tell you a story. Not so long ago, when I was young, I had a burning desire to see my bride, who lived in a distant village. According to custom, we were married when we were only children and had to live apart for ten years until we were mature enough to appreciate each other. Now today that sounds strange, but in those days it wasn't proper for husbands and wives to live with each other too soon after marriage.

NAIK: Certainly not. (Aside.) The shock would have been too great!

TEJO: But I was anxious to consummate our union.

NAIK: I can imagine!

TEJO: One day my auntie prepared a packet of sweets, gave me a few rupees for the journey and bundled me off. Her words of caution range in my ears as I headed out of the village. "Travel only by daylight and stop wherever you are when the sun sets." I walked all day; (Tejo circles the acting area in dance, repeating his aunties advice as he goes.) Then when the sun began to set, I found myself in the middle of a big field. Obedient to my auntie's advice, I stopped dead in my tracks to sleep for the night. It was cool and peaceful in the tall grass. Soon I fell fast asleep. (Tejo proceeds to mime lying down, yawning and pretending to fall fast asleep.) Suddenly, around midnight, I was rudely awakened.

(Enter two businessmen who mime carrying a water jug. As they enter they chant the name of god to ward off possible evil.)

BUSINESSMEN: Govinda, Govinda -- (They move cautiously as though it were too dark to see.)

FIRST BUSINESSMAN: (Stumbling over Tejo.) Hey! God help us, a thief, a robber! Help! (They huddle together, trembling.) Who's there?

TEJO: It's only me.

FIRST BUSINESSMAN: Me who?

TEJO: Me, Tejo.

SECOND BUSINESSMAN: Are you going to rob us?

TEJO: No.

FIRST BUSINESSMAN: Are you going to murder us?

TEJO: No.

SECOND BUSINESSMAN: Are you going to take away our water jug?

TEJO: No.

FIRST BUSINESSMAN: Stand aside and let us pass!

TEJO: Not me. I'm a son of a Bania, and I don't propose to move an inch.

SECOND BUSINESSMAN: What are we going to do now? We can't go forward and we don't dare go back in this darkness.

FIRST BUSINESSMAN: Who knows what else we might stumble over either way.

TEJO: Pardon me. I couldn't help overhearing your conversation. Why don't you rest here for the night and proceed in the morning?

SECOND BUSINESSMAN: Rest here? With you?

FIRST BUSINESSMAN: Ugh! With an ugly, filthy creature like you?

TEJO: No. Under that tree. (Points to an imaginary tree at one corner of the playing area.) Then we can all get some sleep.

FIRST BUSINESSMAN: Is this place dangerous?

TEJO: If it were dangerous, you wouldn't find me here. Now just lay down over there, please. Thank you. (The Businessman move to their designated position on the acting area. All three lay down in unison and fall asleep in stylized poses.)

NAIK: (To the spectators.) So the businessmen lay down under a tree.

(Enter Goldsmith, who mimes his role, according to the dialogue of Tejo and Naik.)

TEJO: Soon a miserly Goldsmith approached. He also interrupted my sleep and tried to kick me out of the way.

NAIK: You refused?

TEJO: I refused, and I warned him not to go on because of certain dangers -- Tigers (Growls.), lions (Growls.), elephants (Trumpets.), snakes (Hisses.).

NAIK: Your auntie's warning was uppermost in your mind.

TEJO: "Better climb that tree (pointing to another corner of the playing area) and stay put for the night," I advised. (Goldsmith moves to opposite side of the acting area. All fall "stylistically" asleep.)

NAIK: Then you all fell fast asleep.

TEJO: Early in the morning hours some tribals passed by. (Two Tribesmen sneak on.) They wore hideous disguises and carried dangerous looking bows and arrows. But I wasn't afraid.

NAIK: (To spectators.) We'll see about that.

FIRST TRIBESMAN: Hey! What are you doing here?

TEJO: Uh -- I -- uh -- I. (Stuttering.)

SECOND TRIBEMAN: Talk!

TEJO: I can't. My mouth won't work.

FIRST TRIBESMAN: He looks like one of those rich Hindu merchants.

TEJO: Who me? Oh no, you're mistaken. I'm a poor farmer!

SECOND TRIBESMAN: Let's beat him up, then he'll tell us the truth.

TEJO: No!

FIRST TRIBESMAN: Let's rob him!

TEJO: "No!" I cried out, "No!! No!! Not me!" (They thrash him, comically; all the while Tejo cries out in protest.)

TEJO: (Trembling, on his knees.) Oh! They were nasty! One of them looked right into my face and growled like an animal.

FIRST TRIBESMAN: What've you got?

TEJO: I have these sweets -- (Holds out an imaginary bag which the First Tribesman grabs.)

NAIK: Which they promptly snatched.

TEJO: Exactly as you describe it. (Still on his knees, trembling.) And that wasn't all. They asked if I had anything else. And -- well -- I'm an honest Bania.

NAIK: You told them about the money your auntie had given you.

(Second Tribesman snatches the imaginary money which Tejo holds out.)

TEJO: (Almost crying.) What else could I say? I'm a Bania. And members of the Bania community never travel without money.

NAIK: So you lost your five rupees.

FIRST TRIBESMAN: (Nastily.) So he lost his five rupees. He's nothing but a fool. (Laughs.)

TEJO: That's my name -- or one of them. (Smiles weakly.)

SECOND TRIBESMAN: Well, I can't believe our good luck.

FIRST TRIBESMAN: Maybe this Bania is mad. He could have given us counterfeit coins. (Starts to threaten Tejo with another beating.)

TEJO: (Still kneeling.) Oh, no, gentlemen. I'm an honest businessman. If you don't trust me, the Goldsmith in that tree will vouch for me.

(The Tribesmen move to the corner where the Goldsmith sits, make frightening war whoops, rob him, and chose him offstage. They return to Tejo.)

NAIK: Tejo Vanio, you are a fool! (The Tribesmen laugh as they squat on the ground to examine their loot.)

SECOND TRIBESMAN: Let's celebrate. (They begin to mime devouring the sweets.)

FIRST TRIBESMAN: These sweets are too dry.

SECOND TRIBESMAN: Yes. We should drink something to wash them down.

TEJO: (Naik holding hands over his ears. Tejo looking meekly at Naik, shrugs his shoulders and turns to the Tribesmen.) You can have water if you like. There are two businessmen over there, under that tree. They've got a jug of water with them.

(The Tribesmen steal over to the Businessman and follow the same procedure as they did with the Goldsmith. The Businessmen make a hurried exit. The Tribesmen laugh and exit in the opposite direction, singing as they go.)

NAIK: Tejo! Tejo! (Laughs.) You've certainly earned all your names. You really have!

TEJO: But I couldn't help it.

NAIK: Then, what did you do?

TEJO: The next morning I continued my miserable journey. (Walks in a wide circle about the playing area to the musical accompaniment.) I thought I'd never get to my father-in-law's house. About midday I reached a wheat field. It looked beautiful -- the grain waving in the breeze. I was filled with love for all humanity. Then I thought of what my mother used to tell me, over and over again, "Be helpful to others."

NAIK: Yes, Tejo, yes --

TEJO: So thinking, I picked up a sickle lying against a tree and began to reap the crop. It was hard work. The sun was hot. But I was filled with kindness for my fellow man and I began to imagine the fat reward the farmer would surely give me for my efforts. When I finished, I sat down to rest awhile and fingered my handsome moustache. You can understand how proud I fet. I sat patiently and waited for the farmer and for my reward. Sure enough he finally came.

NAIK: And you asked for your reward.

TEJO: (Excited, he nods.) "Sir! Sir!" I said, "I did it all! Me! Alone! Singlehanded! Now give me some token of reward!"

NAIK: And what did he give you?

TEJO: (Hangs his head.) He beat me up. It wasn't harvest time.

NAIK: Poor Tejo.

TEJO: (Sighs.) Poor me. Well, I slowly began my journey again. I walked and walked. (Walks about in a circle as before.) Then I reached the gates of a great city. Outside I saw a funeral procession.

(Three men move onstage forming a crowd of mourners watching an imaginary procession pass by. They block Tejo's view.)

TEJO: It seems some rich Brahmin in the town had died. I stopped to watch the procession. (Crowd chants "Ram Bolo, Bhai Ram." Tejo tries unsuccessfully to get a glimpse of the procession between the shoulders of the three men blocking his view.) I couldn't get close enough to see. So I jumped up and down and yelled, "I can't see! I can't see!"

FIRST MAN: Sh! Respect for the dead. If you please!

TEJO: "But I like to watch processions," I said. "And I can't see!"

SECOND MAN: Fool! Why do you speak disrespectfully? This is a solemn occasion.

TEJO: But I don't know what else to say.

THIRD MAN: You should say, "No one should experience such a tragedy." That's what you should say.

(Tejo repeats the line several times as the men move offstage in procession, repeating the chant as they go.)

TEJO: Armed with these new words of wisdom, I proceeded through the city streets. I came upon another procession. This time a happier occasion. A wedding!

(The Groom walks in followed by the Bride and surrounded by four well-wishers.)

TEJO: I was determined to make a good impression. So with the best and most suitable expression I could think of, I said --

NAIK: (Blocks his ears.) No! Tejo! No --

TEJO: (Drops his head.) Yes. "No one should experience such a tragedy."

BRIDE: You planned this, you brute! (She strikes the Groom with her fists and runs off the stage weeping.)

GROOM: (Groom turns to well-wishers.) Fools, I told you not to interfere. (He beats the four attendants and exits after his bride.)

GROOM: Dearest, it wasn't my fault. Wait for me!

(Attendants turn slowly to Tejo moving in on him; he sinks to his knees as they begin to pound him from all sides.)

NAIK: And inevitably -- (Attendants exit.)

TEJO: A wise man passing by saw my affliction. When I told him what had happened he said I was wrong. I should have said, "These are joyous occasions! They should happen all the time."

(Tejo repeat the lines several times, rises and trudges on.)

Was I gald to leave that city! It was a long journey and I didn't seem to be getting anyplace. After a while, I reached a village of scavangers. As I approached I saw a big fire. A house was ablaze. Now I knew exactly what to say. (Shouting joyously, obviously pleased with himself.) "These are joyous occasions; they should happen all the time."

NAIK: And what happened when they beat you.

TEJO: Do you really want to know?

NAIK: Yes.

TEJO: They told me that the next time I saw a fire I should put it out. Well, that night I passed a potter's house.

NAIK: That is absurd! Ridiculous! Next thing you'll be telling me is that the potter had a kiln --

TEJO: How did you know?

NAIK: And that he was baking some earthen vessels and bricks.

TEJO: All right. If you're so smart, tell me what happened next.

NAIK: You -- put -- out -- the -- fire!

TEJO: (Nods sadly, hangs his head.) Then, after that beating, I was hungry and tired. I had no money. So I postponed my journey and took a job for a few days. My boss said that all I had to do was to take his cattle out to graze. My only responsibility was to keep the cows from spoiling the crop.

NAIK: Meaning?

TEJO: Well -- that they should keep the fields clean. Or rather, not make them dirty.

NAIK: You mean -- ?

TEJO: Yes. Now, I ask you, how do you tell *that* to a bunch of cows?

NAIK: And then what happened?

TEJO: Before I knew it, they had eaten everything in sight and the ground was covered with --

NAIK: Shush, there are ladies present!

TEJO: All I was going to say was --

NAIK: Quiet!

TEJO: But -- (Naik muzzles Tejo with his hand, they pant heavily. Then Naik releases Tejo.) After they did what they had to do, I sat down and cried.

NAIK: At such times crying often helps.

TEJO: (His face suddenly brightens.) It was then, in the darkest moment of my youth, that I had a vision. Lord Shankar appeared before me!

NAIK: God Himself!

TEJO: (As if possessed.) "Why are you crying, fool?" He asked me. Me! He asked me! -- Tejo Vanio!

NAIK: What did you tell Him?

TEJO: Everything. All about my past -- my miserable youth. He consoled me and gave me a "blessing." Whenever I said the word "stick" to anything or anybody, they would remain stuck to whatever they touched, until I chose to release them.

NAIK: At last! A turning point in your fortunes.

TEJO: Judge for yourself. Within minutes my boss' crop was back in the ground and the cows could no longer make the fields dirty. After that day, things went better. I worked hard. Then one night, when the moon was high, the bees hummed, and the sweet smell of flowers awakened me, I longed to see my little bride pining away at her father's house. In the morning, I asked my boss for my pay. He knew if he gave me the money I'd go away for good, so he told me to come back tomorrow. For days he kept putting me off. My longing grew. Finally, I became annoyed.

NAIK: I should hope so.

TEJO: One hot afternoon I saw an opportunity to get revenge. My boss was sitting on the garden swing, singing love songs to his wife. His voice sounded like a flock of cackling geese. Hidden by bushes I tiptoed near and whispered my magic word "Stick." (Smiles.)

NAIK: Yes? Go on.

TEJO: Hours passed. Everytime they tried to get up, the swing followed them. All afternoon the sun beat down making them more and more miserable. Soon a crowd of villagers gathered to see my boss and his wife stuck to the garden swing. People poked fun and said that this misfortune must have been caused by their own wickedness. "Nonsense! Call a priest, you good-for-nothing!" my boss ordered. "It's his business to break such spells." Happily I obliged, and searched the village high and low for a priest. Finally, I saw one riding a camel on the village road. As we headed back to my boss's house I whispered "Stick." When a donkey tried to bite the camel's tail, I used my magic power once again. As we neared the garden, a neighbor patted the donkey on his behind. He promptly got stuck there. Then a dog snapped at the neighbor's *dhoti* and couldn't get loose. By the time we reached my boss's house, there was a long procession. The priest on the camel, the donkey, the neighbor, the dog, a cat, an old lady, two kids, chickens, pigs, and a billy goat. Everyone who saw it laughed. They went wild with laughter. Even I began to laugh. Then, when I thought my victims had suffered long enough, I told my boss that I did the deed by a magic power given to me by God Himself. And "If you don't pay my back wages, I wouldn't let you go." Without hesitation he paid me -- even more than he owed.

NAIK: And so your troubles come to an end, Tejo Vanio.

TEJO: No! That's when my troubles really began!

(At this point, the "curtain man" comes to the acting area with Teji following close behind. The musicians trumpet her approach with a lively melody. Then the curtain man holds up the curtain, in actuality nothing more than a plain woolen shawl, between Tejo, who sits crosslegged at the opposite end of the acting area, and Teji, who stands facing the musicians. Her *odhani* [veil] covers her head. Teji is given two lighted candles by the torch bearer. She holds them in her right hand and sings.)

TEJI: People say, "Be happy with your husband. The more he earns, the happier you should be. For ten years, not once has he troubled you." And I reply, "Perhaps that is because I never saw him until today. But now we are together, I think money is his only virtue."

(The curtain man wraps the curtain around his shoulders and takes a seat among the musicians as Teji uncovers her face and begins to dance to the lively music. She weaves intricate patterns with the candles around her head and in front of her. At an appropriate moment Tejo rises and cautiously moves toward Teji. As he approaches, he begins to dance in time to her movements, they crisscross the acting area in rapid succession. Again clowning may be introduced by the actors at their own discretion. Suddenly Teji stops her dance, forcing Tejo to bump into her. He is embarrased and runs to the Naik, who is sitting beside the musicians. Teji coquettishly turns and resumes her dance. Music remains soft here.)

TEJO: Hey, Naik! Who is this woman?

NAIK: Fool, don't you recognize her? That's your wife.

TEJO: My wife! Why would my wife dance before all these people? It's scandalous.

NAIK: How do I know? It's your drama we're seeing not mine! (Music resumes.)

TEJO: Look! (She performs the acts in mime as they describe them.) She's lifting up a pot to fetch water from the well.

NAIK: Why not follow her and give her a hand?

TEJO: I'm afraid! No! No, I was mistaken. She's sitting down to grind grain. How pretty!

NAIK: Help her, idiot! Don't you see her eyes beckon you. The Naik pushes the hesitant Tejo forward.) Go on!

(As Tejo moves toward Teji, he gains courage and begins a slow rhythmic movement to display his prowess. He sits near her and imitates her movements of grinding grain.)

TEJO: (Sings.) Oooooooooooooo. (Speaks.) I won't leave her alone.

NAIK: And what if she's not grinding grain? What if she's making water?

TEJO: (Stops his action.) Oh! Then *I'll* do it too. Whatever she does I'll do. Wherever she goes I'll go. (Tejo rises and dances closer to Teji and sings.) Ooooocoo.

(Playfully pulling at her veil.)

If she enters my house, I'll follow her. (She withdraws as he advances.) And if she lights my oil lamp, I'll follow.

(Tejo and Teji dance reverse turns slapping hands to the accelerated music.)

And if she sits upon my bed, I'll follow. And if she lies upon my bed, I'll follow. And if she --

NAIK: Falls asleep! (Tejo suddenly stops his dance.)

TEJO: I'll follow her. We'll do everything together. Whatever she does I'll do.

NAIK: Everything?

TEJO: Everything?

NAIK: Will you wear her skirt?

TEJO: I'll wear it! (Tejo mimes putting on Teji's pleated skirt.)

NAIK: Will you put on her bangles?

TEJO: Yes! (He mimes doing so.)

NAIK: Will you walk like she walks?

TEJO: I will! (He walks a few steps, swaying his hips comically.)

NAIK: And will you imitate her voice?

TEJO: Yes! (Coughs, changes voice quality to falsetto.) Yes, of course.

NAIK: (Slyly.) And will you flirt with other men.

TEJO: (Falsetto.) Flirt with other men? (Changes to his natural register.) Flirt with other men!

NAIK: Well, you said you would do everything your wife does?

TEJO: But my wife doesn't flirt with other men. Does she?

NAIK: How do I know? Ask her!

TEJI: I see my husband. My husband is near.

TEJO: Teji! (Drops his pose.) Teji! It's me my love, my wife, it's me your faithful husband, Tejo. Faithful wife, it's me.

TEJI: (Teji sings and sways to the accompaniment of the music.)

Don't speak to me so roughly, please. Whisper tenderly with grace and ease. See, my petticoat adorned with flowers, my veil glitters like cooling showers.

Silver bells on ankles shine, tinkling joyously in time. As peacocks sing their prideful song and birds coo lovingly and long.

You get your chosen mate. Only when it's in your fate. (Speaks.) Oh, Zanda! (Music stops.)

TEJO: Teji, that's not my name. Whose name did you whisper?

(Teji moves away flirtatiously; Tejo follows.)

Whose? Then it's true! You love someone else.

TEJI: (Music resumes and Teji sings and dances.)

You get your chosen mate
Only when it's in your fate
Alas!
My true love came too late.

TEJO: (If *Vanio* alone is to be acted then Tejo and Teji crisscross the playing area once more to the dance music and exit at this point. But if *Vanio* and *Zanda Zulan* are performed together, then the following bridge is used.)

TEJO: Who is the rascal? (Music stops.)

TEJI: (Speaking.) Look, husband! Zanda, the Muslim priest, has come.

ZANDA ZULAN

(Music resumes as Zanda Zulan enters, slowly swaying from side to side as he crosses the playing area. He carries a flag pole slightly taller than himself at the top of which is a lighted candle. The flag is a symbol of Zanda. Zanda is accompanied by Daglo, clown or Vidushako, who takes his seat with Tejo among the musicians.)

TEJI: See -- he sways as if intoxicated by marijuana. Look at him! (She smiles lovingly.) He is beautiful, is he not? Zanda has come!

(Teji begins a slow seductive dance hoping to attract Zanda's attention. When he does not respond she rushes to him and takes his hand and pulls him toward her. He gives way slowly like a limp doll bending forward at the waist. Then he pulls himself upright. They repeat this action several times. The music becomes faster. Zanda puts his arm around Teji's neck and they dance. Suddenly he pushes her away and dances alone. She rushes to his side but he pushes her away again. On the third attempt he puts his arm around her neck and they resume their dance. She coquettishly plays with her *odhani* as they move around the playing area. Seeing this display of affection, Tejo rises, puts a handkerchief over his head to cover his face and worms his way between Teji and Zanda. Finally Teji moves away and sits with the musicians while Tejo dances with Zanda's arm about his shoulder. When their dance is concluded Zanda speaks.)

ZANDA: My darling, your hair feels like strands of jute!

TEJO: (In falsetto.) Huh!

ZANDA: What's wrong, my darling, are you sick? Your shoulders are boney and unpleasant to the touch.

TEJO: Huh.

ZANDA: And your breath smells of garlic!

TEJO: Huh!

ZANDA: Speak to me, my love. Lift your veil and make me happy.

TEJO: You are a rogue, sweety. (Tejo pulls off his handkerchief and the shocked Zanda pushes him away violently. Tejo takes a fighting pose. At this point, Daglo rushes between them and also assumes a fighting pose. Zanda sits with musicians. A mock battle ensues between Tejo and Daglo with Daglo getting the worst of it. The drums emphasize their battle. They are afraid to hit each other for fear of getting hurt so they resort to challenges and retreats. Eventually Tejo removes his sandal and pretends to beat Daglo over the head. The Naik makes sound effects with a piece of hard leather. Music stops. Daglo cries and runs to Zanda for protection.)

ZANDA: Hey, Daglo. Why are you crying? (Zanda rises and crosses to Daglo.)

DAGLO: This cuckold of a Hindu tried to kill me with his slipper. (He weeps in an exaggerated fashion.)

TEJO: I did not! I wouldn't spoil my good sandal on your head. Not me! (Proudly.) I'm a son of a Bania. And I wouldn't hit anyone, especially a clown like you.

ZANDA: Forget worldly matters, Daglo.

DAGLO: But this son-of-a-she-devil beat me on my head!

TEJO: Why, you good-for-nothing. (Chasing Daglo around Zanda.)

ZANDA: Stop it! Stop! Both of you. (Zanda catches Daglo by his *dhoti* and shields him from Tejo.) Stop this fighting, you two!

DAGLO: But, master!

ZANDA: Do not let your bodily senses overcome you, Daglo.

DAGLO: But --

TEJO: I'll get even --

ZANDA: Quiet! (To Tejo.) Sir, retire from this place.

(Tejo hesitantly withdraws.)

Daglo! No more quarreling! Offer up prayers to God instead!

DAGLO: What for?

ZANDA: Let your conscience be your guide.

DAGLO: OK, master. If you say so. (Zanda releases Daglo and moves to Teji's side. Daglo sits cross-legged in meditation pose and chants.) God, forgive that son-of-a-she-devil his sins. And after you do, send me carloads of sweets, Om. Hot chillies, mango pickles, rice cakes, Om. Release me from all heavy work, Om. So that I can lay in the shade and sleep all day, Om.

TEJO: (Chanting.) And may you die of indigestion you good for nothing clown, Om.

DAGLO: (Chanting.) Give me a donkey --

TEJO: To kick you in the ass, Om. (Tejo laughs.)

DAGLO: And a married woman --

TEJO: To play with other men.

DAGLO: Om.

TEJO: What did I say?

ZANDA: Shut up, Daglo! That's no way to pray. Watch me and see what it means to pray.

(The other actors retire to the sidelines leaving Zanda alone on the playing area. The musicians tune their instruments in preparation for the philosophical part of the story. Zanda touches each of the instruments with reverence then touches his head as a sign of respect. He alternately sings and chants the following verses in various rhythms, at times reaching a peak of sonorous melody, at other times hushed and intense.)

Oh, Lord, my only salvation, manifested in the perfect man! I salute you!

(Zanda speaks or chants the following in one rhythm.)

External acts alone do not bring God's blessing.
If you grow your hair, or tie the sacred thread
about your chest,
If you wear a beard or apply ashes to your body,
God is not impressed.
Nor by bathing regularly will your sins be washed
away.
Frogs and fishes bath continually,
But only a fool considers them pious.

(Zanda changes rhythms again.)

A true *yogi* is one who burns his desires to
cinders,
Who applies ashes to his body and performs sacred
acts,
A true *yogi* exerts control over his lust and anger.
His five senses have no influence over him for
he has curbed his desires.
Wise men read the sacred texts, worship
and meditate.

(Zanda speaks the following line.)

He is in love with life who renounces it.

(Here begins another rhythm, this time accompanied by all of the musicians.)

Mohammed knows your heart.
He sees your behavior, both within and without.
A wise man knows that meditation means
salvation.
The seeds of this knowledge are within all.
But the man who floats endlessly on the sea
of life,
Who fears old age and death,
Who beats his head against stones,
Who exhibits false pride and is not enlightened,
His Journey is endless.

I, a poor priest, say: (Zanda chants this line.)
Oh, naive one, you who cannot sense the
difference between right and wrong, (Zanda is
accompanied by drums alone at this point.)

You who are greedy and commit evil deeds,
You who harbor bad thoughts, desires, and untruths,
You who dwell endlessly on women,
To you I say: (Zanda again chants the line.)
"Oh, innocent, you cannot distinguish between
a cow and a goat."

(Zanda speaks the next lines.)

But he who takes shelter among good people,
He who knows God,
His sight is a pleasure to behold.

(At this point Zanda is joined by all the musicians.)

Life this life is false, false.
Do not trust in veiled truth.
Birbal, Gang, both are lost.
Where is Akbar Khan?
Where is Akbar Khan?

(Zanda chants the next few lines.)

In this world you get what you give.
The results of your acts are immediate.
When proud men meet obstacles
I, a poor Durvesh say, "Innocent! God does not
like the proud."

(Zanda does a *namaskara* to the audience and retires to the sidelines to join the other actors.)

DAGLO: Now that's what I call praying!

NAIK: Tejo Vanio, is this the man who brought you misery?

TEJO: The very one.

NAIK: But how? Why?

ZANDA: (Moves to center of playing area and addresses audience.) By my dress you can tell I am a Muslim holy man. But I was not always so. Once upon a time I was guardian of Tejo's village. A Policeman by trade. Granted my post by a powerful King. I asked if there was anyone in the village who could make it prosper. Tejo Vanio came forward and volunteered his services to that end. And so our story begins.

TEJO: (Comes forward with folded hands.) Inspector Sahib, if you grant me permission, I will turn this village into a paradise. Gold will run freely from the wells as water from the sky in monsoon.

ZANDA: You have my permission, Tejo Vanio.

TEJO: Thank you, Khan Sahib. (Tejo touches his head as a sign of respect.)

ZANDA: At first all went well, the village prospered. My power increased. Honor and fame came to me. All the people admired and respected my position. Even the children of the village loved me -- so much so that they nicknamed me Zanda, which means "flag," because whenever I used to swing from the trees down by the village pond, I looked like a flag waving in the breeze. For many years all the people were happy under my protection. All but one, my wife. One afternoon, after we had quarrelled, I went to the well to bath and gain peace-of-mind. It so happened that the Hindu girl Teji came there to fetch water. When I saw her I stood very still. My heart pounded loudly. Her beauty blinded me. I knew I loved her.

TEJI: At first Zanda's looks bewildered me. I covered my face with my veil but his eyes pierced me and I knew I loved him.

(They repeat a brief portion of their initial dance. Zanda drops his arm around Teji's neck. After this Tejo steps forward.)

TEJO: I detest that man!

NAIK: No wonder, he made you a cuckold. What did you do to stop him?

TEJO: Listen.

TEJI: Zanda, get me a divorce from Tejo Vanio. He is old and impotent. Get me a divorce so we can be married.

ZANDA: She returned home. (Teji circles the playing area hand above her head to signify she carries a pot.)

TEJO: Late! Where have you been Teji Vanio? Why have you come home late from the well?

TEJI: (Repeats her first song and dance.)
Don't speak to me so roughly, please.
Whisper tenderly with grace and ease.
See, my petticoat adorned with flowers,
My veil glitters like cooling showers.

Silver bells on ankles shine,
Tinkling joyously in time.
As peacocks sing their prideful song
And birds coo lovingly and long.

You get your chosen mate
Only when it's in your fate.

ZANDA: Next morning, I sent Daglo, my trusted servant, to Tejo's house for some pickles.

DAGLO: Pickles?

TEJO: Pickles?

TEJI: Yes, pickles.

TEJO: What does that bully want pickles for?

TEJI: Let me send them to him, husband.

DAGLO: Sure, I never get enough to eat.

TEJO: Quiet you. That Zanda Zulan will eat us out of house and home.

TEJI: Give them to him, husband. After all, we should never refuse his request. It's not hospitable. We should give him everything he asks for.

DAGLO: (Aside.) Clever woman.

TEJO: But pickles are expensive. Who knows what he may ask for next --

DAGLO: (Aside.) Or what he may get.

TEJI: Please.

TEJO: All right. Just this once.

TEJI: So I filled a brass jar with pickles and covered it with my own veil. (Teji hands Daglo an imaginary pot of pickles which he carries to Zanda.)

ZANDA: "My God," I said when he returned. "She has sent her veil. Now I am sure of her intentions. Go, Daglo, and bring her to me. Go swiftly, Teji awaits word from me."

DAGLO: (To spectators.) This constant back and forth between lovers is troublesome to servants. The sighs and tears take place only when they meet. And God knows what happens after that! But then a servant's life is one of the fetch and carry. So off I go!

ZANDA: I sat anxiously awaiting her arrival. Soon I heard her steps outside my door. (Teji pulls her *odhani* over her face and dances a circle in the acting area as Zanda sings, accompanies by the musicians.)

Here she comes, swinging gracefully.
With a veil over her face she greets me.
She smiles, her eyes smiles.
Even her *kajal* [black eye makeup] smiles.
If for nothing else but love's sake, my beloved,
Remove your veil and make me happy.

TEJI: (Teji obliges.) Inspector Sahib, get me a divorce from Tejo.

ZANDA: (Breaks away.) Daglo!

DAGLO: Yes, sir!

ZANDA: Get hold of Tejo Vanio. I want him here immediately! Take two of my policemen with you. Go! Run!

DAGLO: (To spectators.) Off again. See what I mean about fetch-and-carry?

(Daglo rushes offstage.)

ZANDA: Now, my darling, my love, my Teji, I will fulfill your every desire.

(Daglo and two Policement return escorting Tejo. Teji sits with musicians during the following section.)

TEJO: (Salutes Zanda.) Inspector! Inspector!

ZANDA: (Relaxed.) Yes, Tejo Vanio. Something wrong?

TEJO: (To audience.) Something wrong? Can he be joking? (Turns to Zanda.) No, Sir. It's m-m-my wife. She's run away.

ZANDA: She's no longer your wife. She won't come to your house again. Give her a divorce.

DAGLO: Divorce her! Divorce her!

TEJO: (Trembling with fear.) In our Hindu communities, we have no custom of divorce. (To Zanda.) You please send her back to my home. We will settle it ourselves. You are a Muslim. You would not understand our ways.

ZANDA: (Angered.) Are you deaf, Tejo Vanio? I want you to put in writting that you have willirgly left Teji. Come on! Hurry up! Otherwise, I'll relieve you of you life as well. (There's a pause.)

FIRST POLICEMAN: (Slaps Tejo. The Naik provides the sound effect within the leather piece.) Hey, Vanio! What're you taking so long for? The Inspector is waiting.

TEJO: (Fending them off.) Please, don't hurt me! You're my guardians, aren't you? I mean, I've made this village prosper, haven't I?

(They lift hands against him in a threatening manner.)

Well? (Pause.) Haven't I brought properity to you? (Crying now.)

TEJI: Oh, love! Don't kill him! That's sinful. God will punish you if you do.

ZANDA: (Laughs.) Nothing to fear, my dear. Nobody's going to harm him. I expect that he'll be a little scared by threats and that he'll sign you over to me. (Enter one of the Policemen with a paper.) See? We have his consent now. (Policeman gives the paper to Zanda and exits.)

TEJI: Good! Now call the Gore --

ZANDA: Gore?

TEJI: The Hindu priest. He will solemnize our union.

ZANDA: But you know I'm Muslim. What shall I do with a Hindu priest? Let me call my Muslim priest.

TEJI: No! I'm a Hindu. I want a Hindu priest.

ZANDA: But darling --

TEJI: All right. Your priest will solemnize your marriage and my priest will solemnize mine.

ZANDA: Fair enough. Daglo summon, the Muslim priest -- Qazi Dhol Alli and the Hindu priest Gore Chetashankar. Quickly, run!

DAGLO: Fetch and carry. Fetch and carry. (Daglo snaps to attention and rushes off the playing area.)

TEJI: Thank you, darling Zanda. You are considerate and I love you for it.

(Policemen and Daglo enter, escorting the Gore and the Kazi.)

GORE: (To the Policemen.) Now, what has this slut, Teji, done? And why have you dragged me here at this hour?

POLICEMEN: Shut up, you idiot! You'll annoy the Inspector and he'll kill you. Just pay attention. Do what you're told and then clear out. (Gore adjusts his clothes as if to retain his dignity.)

KAZI: (Aside.) I have never seen such a sight! How can a Hindu slut expect to remain in a Muslim household?

(Policemen exit.)

ZANDA: (To the priests.) Gentlemen, welcome! You are instructed to marry us immediately. No quarrels, please. Just do your respective jobs and go.

GORE: My work is simple (Picks up some imaginary earth.) Come. Take this earth in you hands and wash them. (Zanda and Teji follow instructions.) Good! Now hold each other's hands. Very good. Now, I shall recite what is necessary. *Aagdam, bagadam, bhadam, bhodam* -- (It sounds like nonsense syllables, or like abracadabra.)

NAIK: Wait! You mean to tell me that you two were married, then and there?

ZANDA: No, no. Not at all. Just as our union was about to be solemnized by my priest, a messenger came with a letter from my elder brother.

TEJI: When he read the letter any poor love fainted. (Zanda does so.) Zanda, my love what is it? What has happened? Speak to me.

DAGLO: Master!

GORE: Friends, this Zanda has died. Say, "Ram bolo, bhai Ram." Oh brothers, say, "Ram bholo, bhai Ram." (Gore and Kazi rush off the acting area.)

NAIK: You mean you died here? But how can that be? We haven't finished your story yet.

ZANDA: (Revives.) No, again you are mistaken. I only fainted from shock. You see the leading businessmen of the village closed their doors to protest my ill treatment of Tejo and complained to the King. The King sent a letter to my elder brother, who was very annoyed. He sent a letter to me threatening my life if I did not mend my ways by returning Teji to her husband.

TEJI: No! I won't go back. Don't send me back.

ZANDA: (Ignoring her.) I was grieved. I was ashmaed of myself. I respected my elder brother and could never go against his wishes. After his reprimand I no longer show my face in the village. (He moves away from Teji.)

In the midst of my dispair I renounced this world and became a Fakir. Before making a pilgrimage to Mecca, I called Tejo Vanio to settle old accounts. (To Daglo.) Go and bring Tejo Vanio here. At once. (Daglo exits to brings to Tejo who reluctantly salutes Zanda with folded hands and sits on the floor cross-legged.)

TEJO: (Business-like.) You want to settle accounts, no? Well, let me see. (Tejo opens imaginary account book thumbing through the pages.) You owe me three pots of butter, five lengths of green silk, seven hundred coconuts, twenty litres of milk, the same of sugar, floor, corn, and --

ZANDA: I remember nothing of those things, Tejo Vanio. I remember some valuables and money which I gave to you for safe-keeping. I want them returned now.

TEJO: (Smiles.) You want something from me? But I am penniless. You have taken my wife. My, Lakshani! Wasn't that enough? (Closes his imaginary book.) Let's just consider our accounts settled. (Pause; he says with greater intimacy.) If you're repenting your ways at last, they why don't you just return my wife?

(Zanda turns away from him, snaps his fingers for Daglo, who ushers out the protesting Tejo.)

TEJO: Zanda! Zanda! Why don't you return her to me? Return my wife to me. If you're really repenting your ways then send her back home. Send her home! Send her home!

(By now both Tejo and Daglo are offstage. Zanda and Teji are left onstage now. Musicians launch into the final music which is both sung and danced by Zanda and Teji. The dance is characterized by rapid criss-crossing of the playing area by the performers. They do not touch during the dance.)

TEJI: From the city, Zanda came to protect our village.

ZANDA:
It's a peaceful village and with my help it prospered.
But the world is deceptive.
Whatever one sees is misleading.
Notice all you people,
Zanda was respected and honored here,
Until he saw this woman fetching water at the well.

TEJI:
Oh Zanda, return home early.
Tejo's wife needs you.
Bring sweet meats and incense.
Cool her mind with your love.
Because of you, Teji,
Zanda must renounce the world.
Oh Zanda, return home early
And end my longing.

ZANDA:
Beloved, at the banks of the well I lost my heart.
Because of you my mind was dulled.
At the banks of the well, I thought bad things.
Because of you people talked and criticized.

TEJI:
Oh, God of Water, protect me.
Bring Zanda back; I can't forget him.

ZANDA:

Your hair is beautiful, black like a cobra.
Bees swarm about you like a flower.
Zanda says, "The beauty mark on your cheek
Serves as a trap to snare him."

TEJI:

Zanda will buy me bells for my ankles.
When I walk, the road will make music.
But what will the voices of the village say?
Zanda, protect me from the stones they cast.
Return home early, my love.

ZANDA:

Your eyes torment me.
I have renounced this world and become a Fakir.
My tale is well-known among these people.

TEJI:

Once I placed offerings at the temple.
But now I light a lamp at the mosque.
Return home early, my love, for I'm waiting.

ZANDA:

Your face is like a lotus.
Your hands are like flower petals.
Because of you, my mind was dulled.

TEJI:

Even in my past life I loved you,
So now caring can't be wrong.
Please, Zanda, return home early
And end my longing.

ZANDA:

When you laugh your mouth resembles a flower in bloom.
The graceful elephant envies your walk.
You speak honied words
But God is disappointed in me for loving you.

TEJI:

Teji is the bride of Tejo.
Zanda is a warrior from the city.
This romance was destined to be,
Return home early, my love, and end my longing.

ZANDA:

You sinner, water maid!
Because of you I lost my senses
And took the wrong path.
You have poisoned my thoughts and polluted my mind.

TEJI:

What shall I do without you?

ZANDA:

I was intoxicated by your charms.
Now I slap my face to awaken from this dream
Having committed a crime against God.

TEJI:
Zanda is on her bed and Teji fans him.
Come, we will be married by the King of Heaven.

ZANDA:
You are the wife of another;
I am an adulterer.
We cannot marry.
I will become a Fakir and go to Mecca
To make my grave near God.

TEJI:
Zanda, I love you.
I love you, holy man.
I am a sinner.
I have gone mad over you.
Deserted my husband for you.
Oh, Zanda, please forgive me.
Village people, pardon me.
Oh God, be merciful.
All of you please excuse me.

ZANDA:
When I go to Mecca, you go to Banaras.
All bonds of love between us now are broken.
(The final sounds of the music dies in the air as Zanda and Teji exit at opposite ends of the playing area.)

END

Pabitra Sarkar

JATRA: THE POPULAR TRADITIONAL THEATRE OF BENGAL

Historical Background

Jatra,* the most popular traditional theatre-form in the eastern part of the subcontinent,[1] is not so old as to possess a myth for an origin, as, say, the Sanskrit or classical Indian theatre does. But its early history, which has been variously linked to the Rigvedic rituals, classical Indian theatre, and tribal festivals[2] can hardly be called well-documented. The least controversial that could be said about its beginning and early evolution is that it may have sprung from an ancient form of folk-drama[3] but prior to the emergence of the Chaitanya movement in sixteenth century Bengal, Jatra could not boast of any definite shape. It probably existed in the form of loose song-and-dance sequences, very provisional in character, without any pretentions of "plot" or structure. The earliest jatra plays (*palas* in Bengali) that have come down to us dated only from the late eighteenth century. There must have been earlier compositions which are long extinct. It is certain that the earliest *palas*, very much a part of the oral literary tradition of pre-British Bengal, were never written down and so were gradually lost to us. So, for all practical purposes, it is only from the sixteenth century onwards that the nebulous folk-theatre of Bengal started taking a somewhat tangible shape in the form of Jatra. But before prose began being extensively used in literature from the early nineteenth century, jatra *palas* remained more lyric sequences than well-structured plays only held together by a slender and meandering story-line. Around the sixteenth century, Jatra became the most popular entertainment, having pushed the musical narration-cum-puppet dance to the background.[4] Chaitanya (1486-1533) and his associates, astute propagandists as they were, were the first to employ the performing arts (dance, music, play-acting) for the furtherance of their faith. But this fact alone cannot positively affirm what has been called the Krishnite origin of Jatra.[5] It is more likely that Shaivite, Sakta, and other sects also tried to exploit and mold this popular theatre-form for their own sectarian benefit, but were not as successful as the Vaishnavas were. One thing is clear: no jatra play which had the feeblest claim to structure could exist before there arose structured narratives in the Bengali literature. Long poems in which we witness attempts at creating cohesive plots began being written from the late fourteenth century. Most of these narrative poems, which are given a generic name *mangal-kavya* (propitious poem), depict the exploits of a certain deity, depending on the poet's affiliation to the cult of the deity. The earliest extant *mangal-kavyas* that have come down to us date from the sixteenth century. The earliest jatra *palas* were composed on the same principles, structural or otherwise, as those of the *mangal-kavyas*. In both cases the motivations and the content-orientation were the same, as they still are to an enormous extent. These similarities are too obvious to be ignored and if our assumption is right, they make Jatra an audiovisual derivative of the essentially oral *mangal-kavya* tradition. So it is safe to conclude that the former cannot predate the latter. This also reinforces our belief that the Vaishnava movement, although it supplied the main incentive for Jatra, was not the only force behind its widespread mobilization, since *mangal-kavyas* are non-Vaishnavite in their basic content. But Krishna themes seem to preponderate in the jatra plays, and *Krishna-jatra* or *Kaliya-daman jatra* was the most popular jatra type, whereas *Chandi-jatra*, which treat the exploits of goddess Chandi, *Manasar-bhasan jatra*, those depicting the glories of Manasa, the serpent goddess, and *Ram-jatra* based on the *Ramayana* story, were the types which commanded less, but yet considerable, popular interest.

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*For the purposes of this paper I have used Jatra, spelled with an upper-case "J," to signify the genre; and that with a lower-case "j" to indicate plays or particular texts.

The history of Jatra revolves around personalities, like Gopal Ure, Matilal Roy, or Mukunda Das, rather than types or forms. So in it we find somewhat free and arbitrary use of terms, which convey little that is meaningful to us. Appellations like "old" (*prachin*) and "new" (*nutan*) have been used in some places[6] to describe Jatra, but the terms imply kinds rather than chronological change. The "old" Jatra represents *palas* which dealt in religious themes and were instructive and moralistic in tone, i.e., the Bengali versions of "miracle" and "morality" plays.[7] The "old" Jatra was also marked by performances of professional troupes, which were in most cases owned and managed by the chief singer or actor of the troupe. The "new" Jatra seems to be more secular than religious in content. It aims to entertain the spectators above everything else. It is more lyrical or operatic than strictly dramatic. The "new" Jatra also represents another departure: it was originally performed by amateurs, mostly the sons of the nouveau riche of Calcutta, who formed groups mainly for their own amusement. This *shokher jatra* or amateur jatra was primarily responsible for the degeneration of the high moralistic and devotional tone that the previous "old" Jatra strived to attain. Later on professional Jatra troupes also began incorporating the non-religious and secular, in most cases spicy and comical elements into the *palas* they did. The secularization of Jatra probably begins with the performances of the Bidyasundar story made popular by Bharatchandra Roy (1712-1760) in his overtly religious but highly erotic poem *Annada-mangal kavya* (Circa 1748).[8] Ghosh gives 1840 as the date for the inception of the "new" Jatra,[9] but if our interpretation of the term "new" is correct, the date looks tentative at best, since there are earlier attested instances of secular Jatra done by amateurs.[10]

With the establishment of the public stage in Calcutta in 1872, Jatra entered a new, lustreless era. It started assimilating ideas of plot construction, characterization, etc. from the popular plays of the time, most of which followed European models. Some earlier playwrights of the public stage, such as Girish Chandra Ghosh (1844-1911) or Manomohan Basu (1831-1912), borrowed liberally from Jatra, but later it was Jatra which remained at the receiving end. It imitated the themes, the situations, the character-types, the styles of dialogue, even the tunes and wording of the songs from those of successful stage plays, and unabashedly presented them to an eager non-citified audience.

The early nineteenth-century degeneration of Jatra was caused mainly by the wealthy amateurs, the progenies of the Calcutta "Babus," who were seekers of cheap and gross entertainment rather than men with a mission. So before the public theatre was finally in, Jatra fell out of favor with the educated city audience. Several writers around the middle of the last century bitterly complain about the banality, coarseness and vulgarity that Jatra has fallen prey to, and were eager for a change. Playwrights like Ramnarayan Tarkaratna (1822-1886), who in spite of his lack of Western education was surprisingly well advanced for his time, supports Western-type plays as fit vehicles for educated Bengali playwrights and rejects the Jatra as a model for the new Bengali playwright.[11] Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873) laments the degeneration of tastes that the Bengali audience demonstrates in its choice of theatrical entertainment, i.e. Jatra.[12] Therefore, the establishment of public stage and production of Western-type plays ushered in a change of taste which was long overdue and Jatra was almost banished from Calcutta. However, it left its memory in the operatic stage plays which attained some popular success on the Calcutta stages during the second half of the nineteenth century, but by itself it was never accepted with much enthusiasm by the educated or elite audience. Eventually Jatra became the fosterling of its only constant patron, the rural audience.

This state of affairs continued for more than three-quarters of a century. With the independence of India in 1947, some interest in Jatra was revived among the elite audience of Calcutta, mainly spurred by the efforts of political parties, notably the Communists, to utilize it as an ideological vehicle. But the real renaissance of Jatra, in terms of the Calcutta audience, came even later, in the early sixties; of that we will speak later in a separate section.

The Jatra Troupe, Its Audience and Organization

In sheer number, the Jatra audience vastly exceeds that loyalty to the legitimate theatre. The legitimate theatre has, in fact, quite a large clientele in Bengal, since among the cities of India only Calcutta has a continuous and unbroken tradition of public stage performances. Calcutta now possesses five commercial ("professional") theatre halls (one, the Star Theatre, is even air-conditioned) in which plays are repeatedly presented four times a week. There are also four or five "experimental" stages where amateur or "non-professional"[13] *(shoukhin)* groups perform regularly. Occasional performances by hastily assembled, temporary and purely provisional troupes and "office-clubs" are too numerous to record. Calcutta and other urban areas simply seethe with such hectic theatrical activity. This legitimate theatre has a ready and ever-expanding audience. Nevertheless, the Jatra audience is far larger in volume and far more extensive in territory. If one can hazard a rough guess, it seems doubtful that legitimate theatre can ever reach even a tenth of the population that Jatra has access to. The main reason for this tremendous achievement of Jatra lies in the simple fact that the legitimate theatre is primarily confined to large urban areas, whereas Jatra is composed of itinerant companies. City-centred legitimate theatre troupes have considerably less mobility. The commercial theatre companies present the same play sometimes for several evenings, but they do not move beyond the four walls of their theatre hall, primarily because they do not feel any compulsion, artistic, economic or philanthropic, for doing so; and also because the players they employ are mostly movie actors (not the front-rankers always), who can ill-afford to lose a shooting date with the film studios which are located in Calcutta. The amateur and the so-called "experimental" troupes which are in frequent demand travel and occasionally reach audiences outside Calcutta, mainly over the weekend. Since members of these troupes hold jobs in Calcutta, it is well-nigh impossible for them to embark on extensive road tours. The Jatra troupes[14] suffer from no such impediments. They are composed of professional people whose sole occupation is Jatra. The troupes, like the commercial companies, are private businesses whose owners, like entrepreneurs in any other business, act according to the profit motive.

The most acclaimed and popular troupes have their main offices in Calcutta. (Almost all of them are located on Rabindra Sarani in the vicinity of Rabindra Kanan, i.e. the former Company Bagan area.) These are badly lit, tacky and dingy rooms, furnished with a huge mattress laid on the floor, which is covered with a bedspread, the cleanliness of which is not its main virtue. Only very recently has cheap-looking wooden office furniture replaced the ubiquitous mattress. Inevitably there is a telephone. Usually at the back of the office is a storeroom where costumes and properties are kept. The office is never crowded, except just before the beginning of the Jatra season, i.e., around late August or early September. Here sits the owner and/or the manager of the troupe who is in most cases just an executive, not one of the artists. Professional agents or "brokers" come with offers from "parties;"* after much bargaining a price is finally reached and other terms (those about food, shelter and sundry details concerning the maintenance of the company) are settled and the troupe chalks out a schedule of its engagements on the road. Some of the troupes, particularly the more accomplished ones, maintain branch offices at Asantol in the coal mine area of Bengal, where Jatra is in popular demand. Another town where branches of Jatra companies are profitably maintained for the benefit of the teagarden and Assam audiences, is Siliguri in the district of Darjeeling. Not that these are the only centers for Jatra outside Calcutta. Every district or subdivisional town in Bengal has its share of "local" troupes practicing their art with zest, but none are as prestigious or as sought-after as the Calcutta-based ones. At one time Chandernagore was an important Jatra center. We even find mention of a troupe from Manipur, an all-female one at that, visiting Calcutta and the surrounding area in 1926.[15] But Calcutta has continued to be the center for Jatra, with its twenty-odd highly fancied troupes.

So Jatra, as its very name[16] and organization suggests, is an intinerant peripatetic theatre form.[17] Although the popular troupes are located in Calcutta, they perform very little in the city. The coal mine areas of West Bengal and Eastern Bihar, the tea-garden areas of North Bengal and the railway establishment in lower Assam are the areas with the maximum profit potential for the Jatra troupes and these comprise the three main territories which a busy troupe dreams of covering in a single, uninterrupted journey. Those who are fortunate arrange a continuous itinerary from Calcutta upwards to the northeast via the lush northwestern detour of the coalfield region, performing at all of the main towns along the way and returning to Calcutta with a full coffer. Others who are not as lucky have to be satisfied with fewer engagements. Other troupes, which are in even less demand, make journeys back and forth from Calcutta, principally to remote points of the surrounding rural areas. It is these troupes which occasionally run the risk of facing sudden dissolution. If the proceeds are not too encouraging, the owner and the manager sometimes even have been heard of making off with the cashbox under cover of darkness, leaving the performers stranded among strangers not overly enamoured with their act. The local people, however, usually take pity on the ill-fated actors and pay their journey back home.

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*Individuals or organizations that want to have a jatra performed.

As we have already mentioned, the professional Jatra troupes are privately owned business undertakings and as such the actors and other participants are paid employees of the company. Until recently the owner could hire and sack them at will. But recently there has been some concerted effort to safeguard the rights of Jatra actors. Now contracts between the owner and the actor are made on a seasonal basis. When the season is over, the troupe virtually ceases to exist and the actor is free to renew his contract or to sign a contract with another company.

Like any show business, the best salaries are offered to lure a star performer away from a rival group. The "hero" or the main actor of an established troupe is sometimes paid as much as Rupees 2500 about $335[18] which is unusually high salary by Indian standards. A skilled comedian or a vocalist is also well paid. Other players receive payments according to their rank in the hierarchy. The better organized and the more popular a troupe is, the higher the pay for all levels of the hierarchy. But the lot of the common actor is not as bright or as secure as one might wish. What is worse, a Jatra actor, even if he is a "star", does not receive the popular esteem that his copractitioners in the legitimate theatre or the moves do, and there is a definite lack of communication between them.

Control of the whole organization naturally centers in the owner of the troupe. He sometimes appoints a manager and acts as an absentee proprietor, but this is rather rare nowadays. The owner himself, in most cases, now acts as the manager. The days of the actor-managers are virtually over. The best actor is sometimes hired as the "director" of the troupe, to direct the plays and to train the actors. We suspect that the Calcutta troupes do not have much time or willingness to train novices. It is much more profitable for them to send scouts around to pick up talent from outside the city. So the outside troupes train the new entrants and those in Calcutta reap the benefits of their talent. They undergo a long and gruelling apprenticeship. The few star actors apart, the idea is to catch them young. Every year many rural homes in

Bengal find a child missing right after a Jatra troupe has left the neighborhood. The infatuation with the Jatra actor's life is sometimes too strong for the bucolic boy to resist, and he runs away from home, with or without the connivance of the troupe owner. The boy is usually about eleven or twelve when he leaves. A rigorous training period ensues, during which he is given lessons in singing, dancing and acting. He is first given small, mostly female roles. When he matures he graduates to male roles, as befit his skill, character, and predilections.

As commercialism sets in, esprit de corps is not the virtue that a celebrated Jatra actor now cherishes most, unless, obviously, he is also the owner/manager of the company. The social stigma on the Jatra actors still haunts them, since many of them come from a low-caste or peasant background and lack Western education. But this is not to say that there is a kind of castism which prevails within Jatra troupes themselves, which have participants from all castes and, when on the road, exist rather like mobile communes. Some Jatra actors, by sheer skill and sustained dedication, have been able to achieve high prestige even among the highbrow Calcutta audiences. One such giant, Phanibhushan Bidyabinod (the "older" Phani -- "boro" Phani, as he is fondly called) attained enough approbation and respect to merit the highest prize given annually to a theatre actor by the Sangeet Natak Akademi (Academy of Music and Drama) of the Government India in 1968, a fact which may go a long way to revive the prestige of Jatra itself in the eyes of the snobbish section of the city audience.

The Season

The Jatra season stretches between September and late May or early June, since this is the period which is comparatively free from rain. Jatras, however, are performed year round, if proper arrangements are made for fending off the rains and the monsoon storms. The season really gets started from the Puja festivals, which roughly coincide with the harvesting time in rural Bengal. In the village areas the peak season begins after the harvesting is over. This is the time for the emergence of numerous groups, which assemble for the sole purpose of performing a jatra, always an exciting annual affair for the village. Performances over, the groups are most often disbanded, or they lay dormant through the off-season period only to revive into resounding activity until another occasion for performing comes along.[19] But there are other events, irrespective of the time of the year, which call for a Jatra performance. First there are religious festivals like Durga Puja (late September, early October), Kali Puja (held about three weeks after Durga Puja), etc., which fall within the normal Jatra season. Ratha Jatra, the chariot festival, and Manasa Puja, the worship of the serpent goddess, are held in late July or early August, but these nevertheless are fit occasions for a jatra. Besides, there are joyous occurrences in the family -- the marriage of a daughter, the birth of a grandson, the winning of a lawsuit or a village council election by the headman -- in which celebrations are in order. Jatra ranks among the most preferred form of entertainment to be called for on such happy occasions. Of course, it is only the rich, previously the landed gentry, now a prosperous merchant or a village headman, who can act as private sponsors for a Jatra performance, for it is he who has to bear the whole cost of the show, feed and shelter the troupe, and invite the people of the village to see the performance ex gratia.

Still, the winter is the regular Jatra time. Committees are formed, contributions collected for inviting Jatra troupes for performances in the locality, and villages vie with each other to attract the better troupes. The picture is almost the same in other regions of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam. The owners or the management of the coal mines or the tea gardens often contribute a sizable portion toward defraying the expenses of the troupes. It is usual to sell tickets for such community or community-sponsored performances.

The Tone and Structure of the Jatra Play

From the very beginning, jatras were designed for the rural, non-citified audiences. Earlier, they were simply stories roughly outlined through a number of songs. With the introduction of Western notions of playwriting on the Calcutta stages, however, Jatra began to innovate, the sporadic attempts at "structured plots" were in evidence. Now Jatra texts are almost entirely watered-down versions of stage plays. Except for a few operatic compositions like *Noder nimai* (Nimai [Chaitanya] of Nadia). But then there are operatic stage plays, a recent example of which is *Antuni Philingi* (Anthony, the European), which could hardly be told from a jatra *pala*.

As a Jatra play now stands, its structure is simple and rough-hewn, the conflicts are too obviously delineated, the poetic justice too inevitably accomplished. Jatra demands nothing very intellectual or profound from its typical audience member. People go to "listen" to a "Jatragan" (Jatra-song), not to "see" it, which attests to the preponderance of songs over visual effects in early Jatra thus preserved in the linguistic memory. In addition, they go to get emotionally involved in the straight and sometimes only transparently ambivalent conflict of good and evil in the theme, to have a hearty cry from the lachrymose tale of the ill-fated protagonist, or to indulge in unabashed guffaws of the king's jester, who is no better than a buffoon, and come back, chastened and relaxed, probably with reinforced not-too-conscious ethical convictions. Jatra's attempt to instruct the audience while entertaining it is very ill-concealed indeed. In fact, it was with the aid of folk theatre-forms such as this that the vast unlettered masses of Bengal have acquainted themselves with the epics and puranas of Hindu India, getting their first and basic instructions in ethical codes as their religion professed, and opening their minds to the rich and poignant human content of Indian myths. Jatra provided, as it still does, their best liberal education. The plays never contain any high intellectual challenge, lest the audience feel snubbed and out of its depth. The themes are always tuned to an emotionally heightened pitch, which, when performed skillfully, have an instant grip over the listeners. The Jatra audience does not know what "alienation" is, nor does it care to know. Though it is always aware of the new *maya* or illusional element of the performance — the typical Jatra setting never permits it to forget that -- yet its participation in the performance is firm and immediate.

The *palas* which have been written after the establishment of the public stage in Bengal have borrowed heavily from the form and content of the popular stage plays of the time. Now most of the *palas* have a regular five-act structure, with several scenes per act, a formal characteristic that Bengali playwrights, in their turn, borrowed from their European models. The action is melodramatic, but this is limited mainly to verbal pyrotechnics, since spectacle is foreign to the regular Jatra performance. So a typical Jatra play is full of verbal clashes which give out frequent flintstone sparks all the time. The dialogue leapfrogs from crisis to crisis, climax to climax. There can be no intricate and psychologically consistent delineation of a character in its totality, since the design for resplendant dialogue must prevail, even at the cost of character. More often than not, there are lyrical outbursts, made popular by the playwright D. L. Roy (1863-1913) about the turn of this century. Any random section of a *pala* will bear witness to the foregoing comments. Take for example the following scene from *Sultana rijia* by Brajendra Kumar De:

> (Altunia is an aspirant to the throne of Delhi, Badar is his court fool [in the Shakespearean sense of the term]. Jalal, an Ethiopian slave, has been sent as a messenger to Rizia [Razia], the heiress-apparent to the Delhi throne, with gifts from Altunia, along with his proposal of marriage.)
>
> Al.: I am almost married to Rizia you know --
>
> Badar: Oh yes, master. You're going to marry her. That's for sure. And she isn't going to marry you. That's for sure again. Because you have charms but no virtue; and she has charms and virtue both --
>
> Al.: I'll have you beheaded, irreverent rascal!
>
> Badar: Even then you won't get Rizia as your own.
>
> Al.: Why not?
>
> (Jalal enters.)
>
> Jalal: Mere wanting isn't getting, that's why. Here are the gifts you sent, my master.

Al.: What! You brought them back, fathead? Didn't you go to Delhi?

Jalal: I did, master.

Badar: Why, what happened? Didn't the *shehzadi* [princess] appear before you?

Jalal: Of course she did. She isn't a "purdah" woman!

Al.: Then you have seen her. How did she look?

Jalal: She looked as one I've never seen in my entire life. I've seen the astonishing beauty of the ocean; I've been overwhelmed by the indescribable magnificence of the snow-peaked Himalayas, the king of the mountains; the festive brilliance of the setting sun seen from the palm-girdled sea-beach has opened the gates of heaven before my eyes. But her beauty has no parallel. I have heard that the gods of the Hindus created Tilottama by grace and beauty from all beauteous things on this earth. I imagine that Tilottama has ascended to the earth again, this time to grace a Muslim harem.[20]

The fact that Jalal is an Ethiopian slave, presumably unlettered, does not deter the author from putting an occasional lyrical passage in his mouth. Other characters are equally susceptible to such outpourings whenever an opportunity arises.

Badar, the court fool, whose prototype was first introduced by Girish Chandra Ghosh in his character of Karim Chacha[21] (Shakespeare, again, provides the model) has also a Hindu counterpart, the buffoon Brahmin in Ghosh's own religious plays. They are clownish characters who are almost never taken seriously, but, as is ultimately revealed, they are the truest of devotees, profoundest of philosophers. They assume some thinly veiled allegorical significance and Jatra was quick to adopt this type as its own. Their tenuous ambivalence make them somewhat different from the important character-type of Jatra, the saffron-clad Bibek ("conscience") of whom they are the not-too-distant offshoots. Bibek, as the name so obviously suggests, is a wholly allegorical character, once an inexorable embellishment for a jatra *pala*, who moved in and out of the scenes with a word of warning, sounded to prevent an evil deed that is about to be perpetrated by a villain or a misguided hero. He has all but vanished from modern Jatra. He was mainly a singer, a skilled one and this probably has ultimately proved his undoing. As Jatra became more "theatrical" and prose-dialogues began inching out songs, a person with a highly specialized skill outside acting became more or less a liability. Such a person was hard to find in the first place (Jatra, in spite of noble efforts by several devoted and highly qualified people, never could completely shake off the social stigma it inherited from the last century), and secondly, newly-evolved theatrical conventions, influenced and contributed by those of the public stage, rendered him unnecessary. The audience lately was clamoring for action not songs. So Jatra has one by one shorn itself of its several early excrescences, which were once veritable and seemingly essential parts of a jatra, but now are rather vague and rather embarassing memories: the juri,*[22] songs, the dance-numbers of the washerman, the grasscutter, the water-supplier or the cobbler couples (these dances were, however, lighthearted innovations of the early nineteenth century) the dances of the sakhis (the friends of the heroine). Several *palas* had also a character called *niyati* (Fate), who was a woman and who, like Bibek, contributed her share of allegory to the play by intruding in the scenes to sound timely warnings in prose or blank-verse rather than in songs. She also is seen no more. But cryptic descendants of their lineage remain, only now they are given a local habitation and a (proper) name.* Now the *pālās* are more ebullient and "theatrical" versions of the stage plays and they resemble stage plays in more ways than one.

The Setting and the Performance Area

We may start with a quotation from a description of a Jatra performance in the last century:

> On the bare ground, a large carpet was spread, and the actors appeared upon it, all at one time. They usually began their performance by playing on musical instruments only, unaccompanied by any vocal music. The deep voiced *khol* [drum], accompanied by the shrill clang of *kartal* [cymbals], produced a loud musical chord which summoned the people of surrounding villages to assemble at the place of performance. This loud music would continue for a couple of hours, after which the play would begin in earnest. A green room, so to speak, was reserved for the actors to change their dress. Sometimes one would be observed to throw away his false whiskers, and dress himself as a woman, in full view of the audience; the faces were not very clean shaved so that while playing the serious part of a princess or lady of high rank an actor might often be observed to bear, on his chin, remnants of the beard or moustache that had adorned his previous masculine part. The performers, including those who were dressed as women, would sing in chorus; and the master-singer was always behind them and could sometimes be seen pulling the ear of some erring lad who could not pitch his tone correctly to the high note of the musical instruments. Another actor, while delivering a speech, might be tempted by the sight of a *hooka*, and in the midst of a pathetic display of feeling, be seen to stop for a moment to snatch a puff of smoke that issued from his mouth. Sometimes we may see the mother of the hero weeping over his dead body; suddenly she springs to her feet and takes her place in the middle of the chorus which bursts into a song of grief; at the same moment, the slain hero himself rises, in order to swell the volume of the music.[23]

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*One such character is Nicolai in the *pala Hitlar*.

This passage, lengthy though it is, shows the flexibility and lack of rigor which Jatra once permitted within its body of conventions. The present Jatra has done away with some of its looseness, but still it has not turned totally representational or illusionistic. That it can never be so becomes, in fact, self-evident when we take into consideration the immediate environments in which a jatra is performed, chief among which is its performing area or the *asar (asor)*. This *asar*, to our mind, constitutes the most basic and essential feature of Jatra as a traditional theatre-form, since, from it result all other features that Jatra still possesses: its high-pitched and stylized acting, its grand demeanor, its broad conflicts, its crude and coarse comedy, etc.

The proper performing area is a circular space now more usually at the ground level, matted with durries, tarpaulin canvas or carpets, depending on the affluence of the sponsors, and bordered off by strings or bamboo strips tied and run around a few short poles fixed up on the boundary of the space. Nowadays wooden platforms are also erected[24] for the performance area, though traditional performances are still done on the ground. The audience sits all around, on the ground in rural areas, on chairs and benches in more prosperous localities. Jatra happens to be the typical Indian "theatre-in-the-round,"[25] though galleries are seldom used for accommodating the audience, except when it is done in a rich man's courtyard, where steps leading to the hallways serve as galleries. Even though the performance is most often done on the ground-level, the visibility is hardly hampered, since the conventional sitting arrangement conforms to this rule-of-thumb: children should sit at the front, adults behind them. Women usually occupy one particular section, marked off from those of the adult male audience. Unlike that in the movies or in the urban theatre halls, a "mixed" audience, where male and female members of the family sit together, is still a rarity in Jatra, though some are cropping up with the now more frequent use of chairs as seats.

The audience enfolds the performance area, except for a gangway which leads to the greenroom, and the gangway is also fenced off with a string or bamboo strip. The gangway serves as an extension of the central performance area, and its similarity in this respect with the *hanamichi* of a Kabuki stage has been predictably noted.[26]

The action starts on the very moment the actor comes out of the greenroom by pulling aside the resplendent curtain which often bears the name of the troupe. And it does not come to an end until the actor disappears completely behind the same screen. Sometimes, of course, the new scene is put into prominence by a sudden dissolution of action of the previous scene as soon as its actors step outside the circular performing area, after which they just walk fast along the gangway, past the ranting new entrants, without impeding the latters' advance by dragging their action beyond the circular area. The audience takes no notice of their unceremonious retirement and instantly catches up with the next action. Such blending of entrance and exit is as frequent as the lingering movement of action right to the greenroom entrance.

The greenroom *(or shaj ghor)* consists of a small area, covered on all four sides by tarpaulin or plain canvas. There may or may not be a covering overhead. It is about twenty yards off the central performance area. Once in the greenroom, the actors do not always hanker for strict privacy. Some of them come outside by a back entrance, buy a *biri*[27] or a *pan*,[28] or just amble in the open air, even when the jatra is in full swing.

As there is no drop-curtains employed at the performance area, the modern substitutes of the drop-curtain, like the darkening of the stage, is too radical an innovation for Jatra, a continuity of action has to be maintained and the gangway renders valuable service for this purpose. There is no special device used for signaling a duration of time, short or long, between any two actions, except some obvious cues in the dialogue, as also is done to indicate a change of place. No matter what conventions the printed Jatra plays may follow, a regular Jatra play is divided into actions, not in acts, rather like most of the Elizabethan plays. These actions are punctuated by several songs. "Acts" are, as we have noted earlier, recent impositions on the structure of a Jatra *pala*.

Within the "arena" the central performing area, also sit the musicians and the prompter. A *pakhwaj* (a two-sided drum with heavy resonance), a harmonium, a violin, a clarinet or flute and a pair of cymbals constitute the Jatra "orchestra." Early jatras used the instruments cited above, but later jatras replaced those with the instruments that were currently popular on the public stage.

An hour or two before the play is to begin, the musicians start playing. Depending on their aesthetic orientation, they play a timely *raga* (melodic pattern) or catchy tunes from a stage play or a movie. This is an audience-attracting device, popularly called the "concert." This is similar to that practiced in the classical Sanskrit theatre, which was one of many items of the *purvaranga*, or preliminaries.[29] There are, more conventionally, two phases in this concert. The first phase or the "first concert" consists of an enunciation of a typical evening *raga*, such as *Iman* or *Bhupali*, and the "second concert" consists of a speedy movement of tune, fast beats on the percussion instruments and an overall ascending tempo, which make the prospective audience rush to finish their household chores and hurry to the *asar*. The musicians are not at rest even after the performance begins. If something sad or pathetic is going on, the violin and the clarinet keep a constant and subdued wail. When something dramatic is uttered, and there are several such moments in a Jatra play when whip-lash revelations burst forth, all the instruments, above all the big cymbals, crash into a single earth-shaking bang, to make the dumbfounded silence that follows almost unbearable. At other times they maintain an intermittent and low-keyed "effect" music.

The prompter does not have much to do, since in most professional troupes the actors learn their parts by heart and their memory is reinforced by playing the same plays over and over. Still he sits there, close at hand, in case someone makes a mistake. He throws the cues in a whisper and sits idle most of the time, smoking. His script is a handwritten one, quite dilapidated from repeated handling, in which different colors of ink are used to distinguish between songs and dialogue The names of the characters are also written in a different color. The pattern usually is: songs in Indian red, dialogue in blue and the character names in bold vermilion or green or whatever ink comes handy that contrasts with the former two. This is done for convenience; no ritualistic significance should be attached to the practice.

Acting

Within the "arena," the main performance takes place. Because the acting area is comparatively low and the audience large some unusual demands are placed on the Jatra actor. He must project his voice over a great distance for one thing. Secondly, his gestures must be very broad, gestures that suit the "grand" style and high rhetoric of the dialogue and song. The Jatra actor uses his hand gestures quite a lot, and he is constantly in motion, to render himself frontally visible to the audience all around. However his gestures are not fixed or codified as are those of Kathakali or Bharata Natyam. Since the distance from the acting area to the spectators farthest away is rather great, the actor must exaggerate the movement of his eyes to signal primary passions like anger, love, heroism, etc. The flatness of lighting in the acting area makes subtle facial acting almost impossible. It is the Jatra actor's body and voice which are his most handy and useful tools. His voice is usually high and thunderous without being hoarse, his delivery fast yet intelligible. And his pitch vacillates constantly up and down, creating several dramatic nuances, but all distinctly audible even to the farthest spectator. Even his whisper must be loud enough to reach everyone. He cannot indulge in the luxury of "underplaying" on such a stage.

But, to the extent that his immediate performance conditions are modified, the Jatra actor changes his manner of playing, not always for the better. The use of a raised platform, widespread employment of electric lights with arrangements for focusing and dimming, and the use of "sure" microphones[30] suspended above in front of the actors encourage the Jatra actor to try his hand at "underplaying" which he has been quick to pick up from his colleagues in the movies and stage theatre. In fact these devices were first used on the Jatra arena to aid those actors from the movies and popular stages, who were coaxed to perform Jatra from the sheer lucre and to lend it some of their halo of popularity. In the fifties of this century Jatra desperately needed some such gimmicks to keep above water. But even the magic names of the movie stars could not fare that well in the tough arena of Jatra and the practice of employing them has been virtually abandoned. The loyal Jatra audiences did not take kindly to the film personalities who were, unfortunately leaving behind poor actors by Jatra terms. So they have disappeared from the Jatra scene the mechanical aids they needed to ballast and amplify their images.

Where these new-fangled innovations have not yet permeated, the Jatra actor still retains his regal gait and movement, a poise full of grandeur, an aura of magnificence. Of course, this is only true of the actors doing serious, mainly non-contemporary roles. Such overbearing dignity is conspicuously absent in the comic actor. He fumbles, bungles, tumbles or trips, he often has an exaggerated limp or stutter, or some other deformity of speech or body. Ambivalence or irony of character is rarely resorted to, but in some sudden movements of revelation, a clown may throw off his disguise and tell that he is none other than the prime minister of a deposed emperor and thereby perpetrate the audiences' instant change of response toward himself.

Make-Up

The Jatra make-up is heavy and mask-like, and worn with some care, but not as elaborate or as time-consuming to apply as that of Kathakali or Yakshagana. The costume is colorful and costly, unless the play deals with a contemporary theme.

The eyes are made to look larger than they really are, the brows are long and curved, the lashes retouched. The hero and other serious male characters of a religious or historical play have painted whiskers and a moustache. The face is given a thick, rosy base, but that may not wholly conceal the rough unshaven chin of the "heroine." Make-up does not necessarily follow character types with any rigidity. Mask-like contraptions, like demon-faces, are used only rarely. The costume is the measure of the affluence and popularity of the troupe. The brighter and costlier it is, the richer the troupe.

Lighting, Properties

The illumination of the *asar* was formerly done with the aid of oil lamps, hung on poles that held the tarpaulin canopy overhead. The arena had more lights than did the sections where the audience sat, but there was no marked contrast between the illumination of the two areas. Later, carbide gas lamps were used in the semi-urban areas. In the villages where electricity is scarce, mantled "petromax" lanterns are still in vogue. In urban localities, electricity now is conveniently used, and with its introduction has arisen the favorite practice of focusing on the arena by switching off or toning down the lights above the audience area. But "mood lighting" is still unheard of and only very rarely attempted, and that too in very "modern" performances. The acting area is made dark or dim to permit a spot of light to focus on the face of a particular actor. These devices are patently incongruous with the original techniques of the arena acting area. It is still the gait and the voice of the actor which supplement all these modern theatrical practices.

The acting arena is left bare except for a chair, placed approximately at the center, with its back in the direction of the greenroom. As in the Peking Opera the chair serves several conventional purposes. Covered with a silk scarf, it serves as a throne, or a bed on which royal personages rest or recline. Sometimes the hero puts one of his feet on it, to look more dashing, and sometimes it serves as the steps of a temple, or even as the shrine itself. The author manipulates the imagination of the audience in hundreds of ways around this simple chair. Occasionally props are used, but never left in the arena. I have seen shiny brass cannons wheeled onto the arena and fired in a historical play (one dealing with the Rani of Jhansi), but such practices are rather recent. Sometimes a wax head or some such thing is used, but the chair is the only property that remains in the arena throughout the performance.

The Present Resurgence of Jatra

Jatra has had a charmed life. We have seen that the Calcutta audience at one time all but banished Jatra to the villages. The chief complaint against it was its grossness and vulgarity. The "new" Jatra, first introduced by Gopal Chandra Das, popularly known as Gopal Ure around 1842, was primarily responsible for its degeneration. Not that there were not individuals who achieved glory as well as deep respect despite their practice of a degenerate art, which they tried to uplift from its crudity and preference for the indecorous. Serious-minded Jatra producers like Gobinda Adhikari (1798-1870) and Krishna Kamal Goswami (1810-1888), Matilal Roy (1843-1908) and his sons Dharmadas (1869-1917) and Bhupendra Narayan (18884-?) and Mukunda Das (1878-1934) could not quite restore the city audience, but were quite successful in raising Jatra's moral and artistic standards. The elite Calcutta audience had by then acquired a new love, the popular stage, so Jatra had to yield to a better organized rival which had a much more varied fare to offer to the public, from cushioned seats to eye-catching spectacles.

Beginning with the foundation of public stage in 1872 right up to the 1960's, Jatra was nothing more than a vague rumor to the elite audience of Calcutta. It was popular among the "common" people; slums and alleys of the city had their occasional performances of Jatra, but it remained mostly outside the vigorous intellectual drives that marked the post-independence theatre and movie scene. The Calcutta Bengalis maintained a curious double standard with respect to Jatra. When they vacationed in their village homes, they enjoyed Jatra as thoroughly as their bucolic neighbors, but, back in the city, they were forgetful about its existence. The educated audience found it intellectually ungratifying and esthetically unattractive. The Hindu reformist movements of late nineteenth-century Bengal helped to make Jatra more respectable to this highborn audience than its mid-nineteenth-century counterpart, and its earnest participation in the freedom movement did a lot to restore its lost prestige. But still, the elite audience of Bengal took no serious notice of Jatra. Jatra had a very marginal significance in the parade of Bengali culture. This only shows the stymied judgements of the culture-connoisseurs of Bengal, since it was Jatra before everything else which gained tremendous popularity far and wide outside Bengal. Matilal Roy went as far as Jaipur andM ysore to perform his renowned *palas* which found, in spite of the language barrier, an astonishing popularity among the elite in those places.[31] It is an acknowledged fact that Jatra influenced "the folk-theatre of the entire Gangetic plain."[32] There have been sporadic instances of recognition and praise showered upon a Jatra producer by the elite audience of Calcutta, but in all these cases, the appreciation was highly selective and, what is patent, motivated by either religious, reformist, or patriotic considerations. Jatra's legitimate claim as an independent theatre form has remained largely unheeded. Keshub Chunder Sen[33] was all admiration for Matilal Roy's *palas* since they stirred up his own deep devotional fervor, and others commended Mukunda Das in the 1920's for the high patriotic zeal that his jatras so ardently displayed. No conscious effort was made to meet Jatra on its own terms and it remained outside the intellectual milieu of the elite Calcutta audience. It was largely regarded as a "folksy" thing which is good enough for an occasional dalliance, but had nothing in its store to stimulate and excite a "cultured" spectator. Its vitality remained unnoticed and uncared for.

Some changes in these attitudes were evident in the late 1950's, at least to sensitive people like the great Jatra actor, Phanibhusan Bidyabinod, who in 1959 wrote in his diary: ". . . the epoch of Jatra is here; I can almost feel it in my bones. Now Jatra should leave the high heavens and come down to this earth."[34] The historians are rather baffled in the absence of elaborate factual justification behind such a high hope, but Bidyabinod's clairvoyance did not let him down. We have noted that the Communist cultural organization, the IPTA (Indian People's Theatre Association), was quick to grasp the propaganda potential of the Jatra form, and in the early fifties, a jatra, *Rahumukta*, (Freed from Eclipse) written by Biru Mukhopadhyay, was very popular with partisan audiences. From the middle of this decade, the Banga Sanskriti Sammelan, or Bengal Culture Conference, began to be held annually in Calcutta and Jatra found a new place as one of the items it regularly presented. In late 1961, some Jatra enthusiasts organized a Jatra festival in the palace yard of the Shobhabazar Rajas in North Calcutta. One still wonders how it could happen, but tickets were sold out as soon as the bookings opened. In this festival, even the elite among them, who thronged more out of curiosity than any deep esthetic hunger, were enthralled by the vitality and grandeur of the form. They participated in the emotion-charged experience that Jatra created around them without inhibition or intellectual restraint. And once Jatra received their hearty endorsement, it started reorienting itself for their steady appreciation. The Jatra festivals are now a yearly routine in the cycle of Calcutta culture and are done in prestigious locations like Rabindra Sadan. I am aware of at least two periodicals entirely devoted to Jatra, and weeklies like *Desh* and *Amitra* for highbrow Bengalis have started running fairly regular columns on Jatra In 1968 Phanibhusan Bidyabinod received the Sangeet Natak Akademi award for his outstanding and lifelong contribution to Jatra, an event which glorified Jatra. To my knowledge, there have been at least two dissertations on Jatra in Bengali and one in English, done at the University of British Columbia, in recent times and several others in hectic preparation There is one university lecturer who has distinguished himself as a Jatra director and left-wing activist-intellectuals like Utpal Dutta have adopted the Jatra medium as a natural vehicle for propagation of revolutionary ideals. Jatra is definitely "in" now, basking in the warmth of popular and connoisseur approval.

In spite of this euphoric existence, Jatra has as yet not produced a single play of real artistic and literary merit, one that can be translated and presented to a world audience. The reason perhaps lies in the unfortunate fact that no Bengali author with unquestionable literary prowess has taken to writing *palas* for Jatra. The task is still left to a special set of pen-pushers, many of whom can best be described as skilled hacks. But some, besides those noted earlier, notably Aghor Nath Kavyatirtha and Brajendra Kumar De, have served Jatra well and long, and that by itself is creditable. De, who is still a very active and prolific writer, has given valuable support to Jatra during its lean days which preceded its present renaissance. The sacrifice of the late Mahendra Gupta, who gave up a successful career on the public stage for Jatra, is also worth mentioning.

Jatra and Its Contemporary Relevance

Jatra has been, among the traditional theatre forms of India, probably the most adaptable to the vicissitudes of time. In its long and chameleon existence it has abandoned many things which were once regarded as truly intrinsic to Jatra and acquired many features which were regarded foreign to its real nature. In spite of this pliancy of form and lack of codification, it still remains a viable and vital form. This flexibility in formal structure and overall approach has helped to make Jatra always a contemporary medium, in the sense that it has always been responsive to its immediate historical environment. Bidyabinod wrote in his diary about Jatra's need to leave the high heaven. But his implied admonishing is rather unjustified, since, even when Jatra dealt in non-contemporary subjects, it added disguised contemporary material when the occasion demanded. A paradigmatic example is a speech made by the god Sani (Saturn) in an ostentatiously religious play: *Gayasurer haripadmalabh* (The Reading of Vishnu's Lotus-Feet by Gayasur) which runs as follows:

> What more of our misfortune can I relate . . . there is no unity in our home. If we had unity, would we have to suffer at all? . . . They are the most-ill-fated in the world, those who are ever ruled by foreigners.[35]

The patriotic fervor that underlies this speech is only shabbily disguised. So several of the Jatra *palas* were banned by the British rulers, no matter what the plays outwardly paraded, and some of the Jatra producers, notably Mukunda Das, have been sent to prison. This happened in a period when Jatra treated only religious-devotional or remote historical subjects.

All of this has changed now. Jatra has started dealing with contemporary subjects, and having left its gradiose world of deep devotion, high position, resounding heroics and base betrayal, it has started looking into the middle class and proletarian life around it. This "secularization" and "updating" of Jatra themes began with the presentation in 1962 of *Chemra Tar* ("Broken String") -- a stage play[36] made into a *pala* by the Art Theatre of Kanchrapara, which in the opinion of Mr. Gaur Kishore Basak, the owner of the famed Jatra troupe Satyambar Opera, has ushered in a revolution in Jatra.[37] Inspired by the *pala* Basak himself produced *Ekti Paysa* ("A Single Pice/Penny") in 1963 which set off a whole new trend of *palas* dealing with the lower middle class and the poor, life in the "lower depths." We now have *palas* which are Jatra adaptations of popular Bengali novels, some written by luminaries like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarat Chandra Chatterjee. *Palas* depicting lives and times of national and international leaders like Rammohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Napoleon, Hitler, etc. are very popular now. The heyday of leftist exercises in the mid and late sixties had found *palas* on Lenin, Ho-Chi-Minh, Mao-Tse-Tung, or the struggles of Vietnam, Cuba, Africa, etc. the former of which, a Tarun opera production, has even been performed in the Soviet Union. Schmaltz tales of economic oppression and social injustice have also been favorably received. But, as Uptal Dutta has pointed out,[38] the broad types and headlong conflicts are still there in the plays. The characters are either lily white or dark grey, acting within a pre-set pattern of good and evil.

Other innovations have followed suite. Women in female roles are becoming increasingly accepted by the new audience, a fact that was unthinkable as recently as twenty-five years ago.[39] Use of microphones has already been noted. Devices like movie projection, "mood lighting," "sound effects," etc. are not unknown to Jatra now and many troupes advertise the names of Tapas Sen and Suresh Dutta, both successful in legitimate theatre, as their directors of "lighting" and "setting" respectively. The dalliance of film actors with the medium has of course been discouraged, since the audience did not like the idea for long.

The elite audience is not very enthusiastic about the turn of events in Jatra, but they now have at least a fuller appreciation of what Jatra is ideally capable of, and they think this powerful medium can be wielded for better ends. This awareness, however, is not wholly new. The celebrated actor-producer, Sisir Kumar Bhaduri (1897-1959), asked people of the legitimate theatre to go to Jatra for lessons and inspiration,[40] but all his life he was dedicated to the stage. Now several theatre people find themselves busy in the Jatra scene, but none so absorbed in the medium as Uptal Dutta, whose evolution from an actor-producer of Shakespearean plays (done in English) to a rugged Jatra personality is by itself fascinating to follow.

Jatra triggered off considerable discussion in a recent "round table" conference "on the contemporary relevance of traditional theatre" held in New Delhi in 1972 under the auspices of the Sangeet Natak Akademi. In it Dutta characterized Jatra as "a school, a court of justice, and a political meeting."[41] He candidly admits that his concern for Jatra is pragmatic -- for him it is a weapon for his ideological warfare.[42] But we should not forget that other Jatra producers are not so ideologically motivated. The recent "secularization" or even "proletarianization" of Jatra themes signals no other conviction but the one that there is money in it, people want to see contemporary life. The producers will scramble back to traditional themes (religious-devotional and historical-romantic ones) as soon as they feel that the wind of popular taste is going to change direction. No serious attempts at experimentation with the form itself is in sight yet, a form that offers a world of rewarding challenges to an imaginative producer. We still need a producer with power, taste and insight, who can look beyond gimmicks, contraptions and the surface excesses of borrowed "theatricality" and promote Jatra to a medium of entertainment which will be intellectually refreshing as well.

1. The region roughly consists of Eastern Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Bangladesh, Assam and Tripura. The main audience is constituted of those who either speak or understand Bengali. But jatras in Oriya and Assamese have also been very popular in those linguistic areas.

2. See Asutosh Bhattacharya, *Bangla natya sahityer Ithihas*, Vol. I, (Calcutta 1968) pp. 73-74.

3. Some authors, like E. P. Horrowitz, traced Jatra back to the Vedic age. See Guha-Thakurta, *The Bengali Drama* (London, 1930) for an exhaustive collection and discussion of views about its origin.

4. Sukumar Sen, *Nata natya natak* (Actor, Theatre, Play) (Calcutta, 1965) pp. 55-60.

5. Guha-Thakurta, pp. 8-16.

6. See Bhattacharya, p. 76.

7. One should, of course, keep in mind some basic distinctions of Jatra from miracle and morality plays. For a discussion, see S. K. De, *Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Calcutta, 1962) pp. 404-405.

8. Western readers can look into a very readable prose translation of the story by Edward C. Dimock.

9. Santideb Ghosh, *Gramin nritya o natya* (Rural Dance and Drama) (Calcutta 1959) p. 76, quoted in Alamgir Jalik, *Jatragan*, *Bangla Academy Patrika*, Vol. VIII, No. 3 (Dacca 1969) p. 46.

10. See Hamsanarayan Bhattacharya, *Jatragane matilal roy o tamhar sampraday* Matilal Roy and His Troupe in Jatra) (Nabadwip, West Bengal, 1967) pp. 10 - 12.

11. In the preface of his play *Ratnabali* (1858).

12. See the verse foreword of his play *Sermistha* (1859).

13. By the term we mean those troupes the members of which hold other jobs and do plays as a serious avocation.

14. In this case, we are taking into account only troupes which are professionally or commercially organized. The amateur Jatra troupes that crop up and disappear like seasonal flowers offer wares which can be termed "poor" at their best. The contrast with the legitimate theatre is interesting here. In the theatre, it is the troupes outside the commercial stage which set up rigorous standards for what is good in Bengali theatre. Whereas in Jatra, it is the professional companies which put on good and well done, if not artistically faultless, Jatra shows.

15. See Bhattacharya, p. 13.

16. Jatra literally means "setting out," "journey."

17. As a selected example of the exhausting schedule that many companies regularly undertake, the Tarun Opera during its 1969-70 season performed its popular jatra *Lenin* on the following dates and in the following places: December 22, 23 and 24 Raigunge; December 25-26 Mathabhanga; 27 Banarhat; 28 Mekhligunge; 29 Bakshir Hat; 30 Alipur Duar; 31 Siliguri; January 1-2 Alipur Duar; 3-4 Malabazar; 5-6 Dhupguri; 7-8 Coochbihar and 9-10 Kamakhyaguri.

Many Jatra troupes, like the Tarun, bear the appelations "opera" or "Jatra party" at the end of their names. Some who are eager to distinguish themselves from the common run of troupes call themselves "Theatrical Jatra Party," which is really what all the troupes are.

18. One particular actor, who was a film star also, was once offered Rs. 10,000 as a monthly salary. See Utpal Dutta, "Theatre as a Weapon" in *The Drama Review*, Vol. XV, No. 3 (Spring 1971) p. 231.

19. Most of these transient troupes often perform for charities to aid the construction of a school or a library. That Jatra began as a post-harvesting entertainment has been evident from the words of Amar Nath Pathak in his *Bangal ki jatragan* (Jatra of Bengal), *Navrang* (in Hindi), Year 2, Vol. 4 (October-December 1965) p. 66.

20. From Brajendra Kumar De, *Sultana rijia*, I:i. Collected in Sutradhar (ed.), *Palasahitya* (Calcutta 1968) p. 21.

22. *Juri* is the name of a group (usually four) of male singers who otherwise sat silently at four corners of the *asar*, but at the approach of the *juri* song, suddenly they jumped up and began singing with gusto. They dressed, for no apparent reason, like dandified nineteenth-century Bengali gentlemen, or like court pleaders with black gowns and all.

23. See Dinesh Chandra Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature* (Calcutta, 1954) pp 607-607.

24. Gargi writes as if the raised platform was a permanent feature of Jatra. This has not been so; see Balwant Gargi, *Folk Theatre of India* Seattle and London, 1966 [illegible] 11.

25. Nowadays, of course, Jatra plays are being put on the regular picture-frame stages of Mahajati Sadan and Rabindra Sadan, but not all Jatra audiences are happy about it.

26. Gargi, p. 11.

27. Thin country cigarettes.

28. Betel leaves.

29. Gargi uses the term itself in the context of Jatra, but I have never heard Jatra people use such classical terms, nor have I seen any printed Jatra text bear them.

30. A certain type of microphone with multi-directional receptivity is called "sure" in this region of India.

31. Bhattacharya, p. 63.

32. Adya Rangacharya, *The Indian Theatre* (New Delhi, 1971) p. 86.

33. A famous Bengali reformist leader of the last century, who, in the seventies led the more progressive section of the Brahmo Samaj break away from the mother organization to form Bharatbarshio Brahmo Samaj in 1865. He himself, however, was later repudiated by some of his young followers.

34. Quoted in Sutradhar: *"Chemra khatay kaler itihas"* (History of Time in a Torn Notebook), *Desh*, Entertainment Number, 1970, p. 142.

35. See Nandalal Bhattacharya, *"Jatray Swadesikata"* (Patriotism in Jatra) *Amrita*, Vol. IX, 15 (Calcutta, August 15, 1969) p. 225.

36. Written by Tulsi Lahiri, this play has been successfully staged by Bohurupee, the renowned experimental theatre troupe of Calcutta.

37. See Dilip Manlik, *"Alor Britte"* (In the Illuminated Circle), *Amrita*, (September 26, 1969), p. 703.

38. Suresh Awasthi (guest editor) *Journal of the Sangeet Natak Akademi*, 21 (July-September 1972) p. 16.

39. There are mentions of "mixed" troupes in mid-nineteenth century. Ram Chand Mukherjee's troupe, around that time, was probably the first to introduce woman players in female roles. There was a "Bou Kundur Dal" managed by Mrs. Kundu; and, as we have already noted a whole troupe from Manipur, composed entirely of women who visited Calcutta in 1926 See Bhattacharya, Hamsewar: op. cit., pp. 13-14.

40. See Sambhu Mitra, *Prasanga: Natak* (Topic: Theatre) (Calcutta, 1971) p. 167.

41. Awasthi, p. 16

42. Dutta, pp. 225-237.

Sambhu Bag

HITLER

A translation of a
modern Jātrā by
Aditi Nath Sarkar

Author's Introduction

Adolf Hitler is a terrifying figure in the history of the world, the man who wanted to change the map of the entire earth, singlehandedly. And mankind has not restrained itself from spitting on him in derision. Had his pride, his anti-Semitism, his extreme thirst for battle, his violent love for his country and people not become poisoned with the venom (*biṣ*) of hatred, the world of the future would have taken a different course. He has wanted to raise the nectar (*amṛta*) of patriotism in the chalice of imperialism to the lips of the Greater Germany of his imagination, but one drop of hatred turned into venom (*garal*) and turned all Germany blue* (i.e., as an effect of poisoning), and even called down a most pitiful tragedy on himself. Who does not feel pity on reading of his mournful life? Thus Hitler is like a tremendous prohibition to the imperialist politicians of the future -- "Never make a mistake such as this." The more discussion there is of such a personality, the better it is for the welfare (*maṇgal*) of the world.

Many have questioned the necessity for a play about Hitler today. But nowhere does the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Poetics) say that a play must fulfill all intentions at all times. Moreover, it is undeniable that everything has a negative aspect. If Hitler is observed in this light, no problems remain. However, if in depicting the personality of Hitler my personal sympathy has gone towards him, in spite of his thousand crimes gainst society, it must be understood that it has resulted from remembering his pitiful (*karuṇ*) tragedy. And for the very same reason, the personality and drama of Hitler has submerged the personality of Stalin.

The play is dedicated to Santigopal, the able and progressive helmsman of the Tarun Opera Company, through whose expert acting the Hitler of dead and bygone history came alive and earned for him recognition as the "Best Jātrā Actor of 1968" from millions of listeners (*Śrotā*).

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*Translator's Note: This is an allusion to an incident connected with the churning of the Milky Ocean by the gods and the demons. The objective was to produce *amṛta*, the nectar of immortality, but the first thing to arise was a black poison, *kālakuṭa*. It threatened the cosmos until Śiva, the only person strong enough to drink it with impunity (to him it tasted no different from *amṛta*), held it in his throat, which promptly turned blue earning him the appellation Nīlakaṇtha or "Blue Throat" (*Mahābharāta*).

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The Germans

Hitler	The German Führer
Goering	Field Marshal
Von Vock	Field Marshal
Blunstein	A Gunner
Maurice	A Spy
Bucher	A Soldier
Rolf Keller	A Soldier on the Kotelnikovo Front
Eva Braun	Hitler's Mistress
Barbara	Eva Braun's Maid

The Russians

Stalin	The Russian High Commander (sic)
Zhukov	Field Marshal
Seravich	A General
Dniester	A Wireless Operator
Petroslavasky	An Intelligence Gatherer
Nikolai	A Patriot
Lucy	A Spy
Muniya	A Commander in the Suicide Column

Soldiers on both sides.

HITLER

Prologue

(Overture music with bugles and kettledrums. Sound of planes flying overhead and patrolling armored cars. Then, sound of a radio being tuned. Static and jumbled reception. Finally, the desired station comes in clearly.)

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE: This is Radio Berlin. Instead of the scheduled program, we are about to present to our listeners the words of our great Führer Adolf Hitler addressing a public meeting at the Königs-Platz.

(Broadcast changes to a transmitter at a public meeting. Clamor of cheering voices rising in a crescendo. Intermittently we hear "Heil Hitler!" As the lights come up on stage, we see Hitler, standing behind a bank of microphones. He raises his arms, signalling the crowd to be silent. Immediate silence.)

HITLER: My German brethren! My fellow Nazis! What I am about to tell you today is in many ways a repetition of what has gone before. Yet, I am forced to draw your attention, again and again, to the same facts. Germany belongs to the Germans alone. All Germans, all over the world, are one nation. Pure Aryan blood flows in the veins of the German race. And it is the birthright of the German race to rule over non-Aryan races. Remember once again the tricks played by the Allied forces to encroach upon this right at Versailles on June 26, 1919, after the First Great War. That treaty revealed the naked truth about the haughty pride of the Allies and the ineffaceable shame of the defeated Germans. We have replied to that haughty pride of the Allies by extending our domination over Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania -- all the Balkans. But we have not been able to give them a total reply. America, Britain and Soviet Russia -- these three Allied foes are still outside our control. On one side the Bolshevik Communist Party, and on the other the Imperialists, opposing Germany. They had said at Versailles that Germany must hand over reparations worth a crore a year to the League of Nations. And that Germany could keep an army no larger than 100,000 soldiers. That our products could be sold to the Allies and the Allies only. Instead of our manufacturing necessary armaments, they would have to be bought from the Allies. And even, that Germans could not learn in their own mother tongue in their universities and schools. What depths of vindictive meanness! But they did not know Hitler then. They had not heard of his fiery speeches on the Wilhelmstrasse. They did not know how it was possible that, in a trice, all Germany became covered with soldiers, how the band of liberators advanced, ignoring the Treaty of

Versailles. Today they stare in fear at Germany, at Hitler's plan to devour the entire world. I firmly believe that the time for our just revenge against them must come one day. The United States is very far off, today. But one country is almost at our doorstep. We'll see how tough they are. That supreme conflict is at hand, and we are prepared for it. I am proud to be the Führer of this great nation. And for what little time He grants me, to lead this, the world's greatest battle, to its successful conclusion, I thank the Almighty. The three leaders of the Allied nations, de Gaulle, Churchill, Roosevelt, had marked me as a madman. Yet today, they faint at the name of Hitler, the friend of Tojo and Mussolini. Only the other day Roosevelt sent a mission, with proposals for a treaty. The impertinence of that aged barbarian. Greater Germany accept the friendship of that land of tobacco -- America! No!

(Lights begin to fade as voices from the crowd shout approval. The rest of Hitler's speech, echoing and re-echoing over the speakers is heard above the clamor.)

HITLER: No to the Treaty! (Echo.) No to alliance! (Echo.) Rejection for rejection! (Echo.) Hate for hate! (Echo.) Blood for blood! (Echo.) These are the Führer's orders. These are the most cherished thoughts of Hitler, the terror of the world. This is the fulfillment of the dream of Greater Germany. Therefore, no more words today, but only one. Moscow! (Echo: "Moscow -- ow -- ow")

(Tremendous applause, cries of approval rising in a crescendo.)

Act I, Scene 1

(The lights come up on stage, Goering and Von Bock are discovered talking. A room in the German camp. A large map of the world hangs on the wall. The three entrances to the room are guarded by sentries who walk around with fixed bayonets.)

GOERING: Your attention please! Marshal Von Bock! You have been summoned here on orders from the Honorable Führer. Your presence here today is important for all of us; exactly how important will become clear to you in a moment. You are a man of great maturity -- I think you'll soon be in your sixties -- and you have vast combat experience. You have shown numerous examples of tactical skill on the western front. Consequently, I believe you have a particular strategic concept about the geography of the world. But still, let me remind you --

VON BOCK: Please go on, Marshal Goering!

GOERING: Here you have a map of the world. On the one side America, Asia on the other. We are, that is to say, Europe is, placed between America and Asia. Britain and Russia are the two major European powers. Now, since Britain is a close neighbor to us, to Germany that is, we have prevented her route of attack by conquering France and Spain. Next to that -- Italy, a nation friendly to us. Now please observe the eastern frontiers of Russia, where we have China and Japan. China, since she has left the League of Nations, will not help Russia or anyone else. Therefore, exactly what have we gained by establishing an alliance with Japan?

VON BOCK: If America and Britain are prevented from coming by the Baltic route, they will try to assist Russia via Japan.

GOERING: Exactly! Well then, Russia now receives assistance from no one on any side.

VON BOCK: Yes, Marshal Goering! Your supposition is flawless.

GOERING: Now please observe. This is Russia. In attacking Russia, we are about to open three sectors simultaneously. The front, here, will extend over two thousand miles from the Baltic in the north, to the Black Sea in the south. According to the instructions of the Honorable Fuhrer, the commanding general of the northwest sector, with Leningrad and the Baltic states as target, will be Field Marshal Von Leeb. His deputies will be General Kuchler, General Busch for the area around Lake Peipus, and General Hoepner for the tank corps. For the second or central sector, with the Soviet capital Moscow and the Province of White Russia as target, the commanding general will be Marshal Von Bock, that is -- yourself. Your aides will be Field Marshal Von Kluge, General Strauss, General Von Weicks, General Hoth of the tank corps, and Marshal Kesselring of the air force.

VON BOCK: And in the southern sector?

GOERING: Ah yes, in the third or southern sector, with the entire fertile Ukraine region as target, the commanding general will be Field Marshal Rundstedt; his deputies, Field Marshal Von Reichenau of the Zhitomir Column, General Stulpnagel, General Von Kleist of the tank corps, General Von Schobert of the Dniester River Army, and General Loehr of the air force. Now do you understand the strategy?

VON BOCK: Our victory is inevitable, if everything goes according to plan.

GOERING: "If!" No, Marshal Von Bock. There is no room for "ifs" and "buts" in the Honorable Führer's plans.

(Enter a sentry. Salutes and speaks to Goering in a low voice.)

GOERING: Send them in.

(As soon as the sentry salutes, turns around and moves away, Lucy and Maurice come forward, and greet the generals in the civilian manner.)

VON BOCK: Who are they, Marshal?

GOERING: Maria, a woman worker recruited from our second line of defense -- Marshal Von Bock -- and Maria, with you?

LUCY: This is Ivan Maurice. A very well-known agent from our Intelligence Branch. I was given the responsibility of bringing him here from the I.B.

(Extends some documents to Goering, who rapidly glances over them and looks toward Maurice.)

GOERING: According to this, you know the different routes to Moscow. We welcome you, Maurice. I had inquired of the I.B. for someone exactly like you. Many thanks for bringing him to us, Maria.

LUCY: May I leave now, Marshal?

GOERING: No, wait. You know shorthand, don't you? Take notes of our discussion. Pen and paper -- over there.

(Lucy gets ready with pen and paper. In the meantime Maurice has opened a map which he has produced from his pocket.)

GOERING: You may start, Maurice.

MAURICE: This is a rough sketch map of Russia. Very recently made. This is the Polish frontier on the west. Starting from Warsaw in Poland the advance should be directly eastward via Brest-Litovsk. The famous Pripet marshes between Russia and Poland will come directly in front. Keeping the marshes in between, the advance should continue on its north and south, towards the Stalin Line.

VON BOCK: Then?

MAURICE: The Minsk-Smolensk-Moscow Road is directly north of the marshes. It's very famous. It was by this road that Napoleon attacked Russia.

VON BOCK: And on the south?

MAURICE: Yes, there's a route on that side too. On the south of the marshes, we must cross the Dnieper through the Stalin line. Then Moscow, by way of Kiev.

VON BOCK: Let me keep this for the present. I'll call you later on, if necessary.

MAURICE: Thank you, Marshal. My name is Ivan Maurice.

GOERING: You may go now.

(Maurice salutes and leaves with the sentry.)

GOERING: Now let's go back to what we were discussing before. Look, here's the two thousand mile front, with three principal points of attack. But actually we will have to divide it into eight or ten sectors. And, oh yes, another thing . . .

VON BOCK: Excuse me, Marshal! Marshal Von Leeb is advancing on the western front; won't Finland prevent this?

GOERING: Finland? No, because by the treaty of March 14, 1940, Russia stripped Finland of the entire western shore of Lake Ladoga, including the Karelian Isthmus, the port of Viborg and the Mannerheim line. Consequently, Finland is dissatisfied with Russia. Therefore, to help us, General Mannerheim is giving us permission to use ships over the Baltic route using the Finnish port of Turku. Moreover, Sweden and Norway are neutral. We can advance by their borders. Yes, what I was going to say was --

VON BOCK: Yes?

GOERING: Our fundamental battle strategy will be a "war of attrition," the destruction of the Red Army at any cost. And the destruction of the Red Army means the fall of Russia. Furthermore, this campaign must follow the Honorable Führer's new regulation and proceed according to schedule. That is to say, advance with the hands of the clock.

VON BOCK: For example?

GOERING: For example, the Polish campaign was completed in eighteen days, the campaign in Flanders in twelve, the Balkan campaign in ten. Even the attack made in France on the Weygand Line after the famous Maginot Line, because of which attack the fall of Paris became imminent, even that final attack came on the predetermined twenty-sixth day. We must similarly advance on a fixed schedule this time as well.

VON BOCK: We will indeed remain alert to that.

GOERING: And please remember, on any offensive whatever, do not leave any of the enemy unfinished. Of course, you are old and experienced, and it is pointless giving you this advice. But still let me say this: let the ultimate disgrace of Russia be inscribed on the path taken by Marshal Von Bock. Hence, I repeat, our aim indeed will be to reach the enemy, surround him, and reduce him as close to the perimeters of his base as possible. Therefore, so long as we cannot shatter the Red Army's capability to strike, nothing will be achieved by the expedition to Moscow.

VON BOCK: I hope I'll be able to fulfill the Führer's orders. But there was something --

GOERING: Do please speak up.

VON BOCK: I can't understand why we are taking such a great risk even after the disaster suffered by Napoleon.

GOERING: Risk! Can you tell me, Marshal, what great task was ever performed without risk? Because you have the responsibility of so many troops on your shoulders, you are a field marshal. That, too, is a risk. The future of a number of students rests on a teacher, that is the teacher's risk. Fundamentally speaking, that we are alive is nothing but a great risk, Marshal Von Bock!

VON BOCK: Yes, that is true, of course.

GOERING: If that is true, then why shouldn't our endeavor to expand our empire be true? Look at America and Britain. If you do, you'll see that they are constantly probing through thousands of spies in country after country to see who has a weakness and where. Night and day the competition goes on to swallow someone by striking at the right center at the appropriate time. If we fall behind in this competition, then know that we ourselves will become their morsel and be wiped off from the map of the world.

VON BOCK: There's no denying that.

GOERING: Moreover, since we have received the permission to step out, through the generosity of our most Honorable Führer, tell me, why should we throw away the opportunity so carelessly?

VON BOCK: Hmm!

GOERING: Then be prepared. The twenty-second of June has been fixed as the auspicious day of our departure. At 4:00 A.M. on the twenty-second of June, 1941, Germany will embark on her epic campaign.

VON BOCK: Excellent! You will always find me ready for the ultimate, Marshal Goering.

GOERING: Thank you, Marshal Von Bock. Then finish off the work in your bureau as quickly as you can. And here, the Führer's orders.

(After handing over the documents bearing the Führer's orders, both salute in the military manner.)

VON BOCK: Heil Hitler!

GOERING: Heil Hitler!

(Exit Von Bock. Goering takes the notes from Lucy and skims through them.)

LUCY: I'll type them out and bring them to you in less than fifteen minutes, Marshal.

GOERING: That won't be necessary, Maria.

(He tears up the notes and throws them away.)

You may go now. And thank you

(As Lucy, slightly stunned, bends down to pick up the torn pieces, Goering puts his boot over them. Lucy looks up in surprise.)

GOERING: I know every one of those syllables by heart, Maria. Only Marshal Von Bock has been informed that a written record of our discussion and his opinions is to stay in our hands. Thank you again for all your trouble.

LUCY: Heil Hitler!

GOERING: Heil Hitler!

(Exit Lucy. Goering picks up the torn paper in a crumpled ball.)

GOERING: Marshal Von Bock! Don't mind this bit of espionage behind your back. German military strategy is based on this, indeed. I myself don't know if, unseen by me, someone is shadowing me! Guards!

(Three guards stride in and salute.)

GOERING: No, it's nothing. Go and rest.

(The lights go out with Goering's departure.)

Act I, Scene 2

(As the lights come up on stage, Muniya is discovered helping Seravich put on his uniform. Sounds of marching feet and commands, offstage.)

MUNIYA: Last year I put a uniform on your father, Seravich, with my own hands.

SERAVICH: And he welcomed a hero's death, fighting bravely with the Red Army in Poland. Bless me mother, so that I too can --

MUNIYA: (In terror.) No, no, no, darling, never --

SERAVICH: But why, mother! Are you afraid of blessing me? Is there anything more noble than death in battle? Yet let me tell you, with your blessing, the enemy won't be able to harm a single hair on your boy's head.

(Muniya draws Seravich to her.)

MUNIYA: Yes, of course I'll bless you, my child. Here let me bless you. But do they ever come true, my blessings? People say I'm a witch. One by one I've killed my father, husband; I've cast away all my children into war.

SERAVICH: Quiet, mother! You did not cast us away. The country called us to her. She is a "mother " too. And in this time of woe, if your children had remained in your lap, would that not be shame? Your son is the commander of the Lyck sector. That parade of soldiers you see in the square before you -- your son will lead them in the world's second great war. Let your face shine with the joy of pride, mother. Become an image of the ideal Russian mother. Cry: Stalin Zindābād!

MUNIYA: Stalin Zindābād!

SERAVICH: I have to go and take reports now. Farewell, ma! Why? Won't you bless me?

(Muniya again and again pulls Seravich to her. Embrace.)

MUNIYA: Yes child, yes, my blessings. Be noble. Make your country proud of you. May the enemy fail to touch a single hair of your head.

(A squad of soldiers enters, marching. Inspection and roll call, etc., while Seravich bids his mother farewell. He returns, inspects and dismisses them and they disperse. Enter very quietly through their ranks, Lucy. In her overcoat and cap, she will appear to be a man at first. Seravich feels someone's loitering presence and irritated, speaks brusquely.)

SERAVICH: Go and rest now. What are you doing here?

LUCY: I came here to rest, really. Oh! I'm so tired.

SERAVICH: Oh! Lucy!

LUCY: No, M-a-r-i-a.

SERAVICH: Yes, to those German devils. To me -- .

LUCY: To you?

SERAVICH: (Very serious again.) To me, uh us, you are Lucy -- Lucy, Lucy! Enough, give me news.

LUCY: There is plenty of news. But will you let me rest a little?

SERAVICH: Lucy, you are speaking to General Seravich.

LUCY: (Seriously.) I'm sorry, General. They are advancing.

SERAVICH: Advancing? From which direction? And where will they start the attack? And when? What time?

LUCY: They will start the attack June 22nd, Sunday, at four in the morning. They have three main bases, west, central and south, yet their forces are divided into many sectors.

SERAVICH: And then?

LUCY: One division will enter in two arrowhead formations by way of Kaunas and Shavli into the Baltic states. Another is coming through northern Poland, Grodno, Baranowicze and Brest-Litovsk. And there is another column with thousands of tanks coming in this direction at Lyck.

SERAVICH: And then?

LUCY: Another formation is spreading out over the southern Polish border, around Brody, Lwow and Pryzemysl. Yet another group is advancing towards the Ukraine along the Bessarabian border of Rumania, on the Cernauti-Jassy Road, across the River Prut. The Supreme commander of the German forces is Field Marshal Von Brauchitsch.

SERAVICH: Dogs!

LUCY: I've some pictures of their tank formation on the Lyck border.

SERAVICH: Superb! Let me see --

LUCY: Here you are, sir!

(Lucy hands over the pictures. Seravich examines them through a lens.)

SERAVICH: Twenty-five in each file. Assault troops. Tank convoy, Panzers. Oh yes, the twenty-second. What day is that?

LUCY: Such a great general and you don't even keep track of the calendar!

SERAVICH: Lu-cy! Again!

LUCY: All right, it's okay. I'll shut up. But don't ever ask me anything again.

SERAVICH: You've -- you've become very impertinent.

LUCY: Even more than you people.

SERAVICH: Meaning?

LUCY: It's only to control the flightiness of you men-folk that we had to join the army.

SERAVICH: You mean to say that we couldn't function without you?

LUCY: Of course.

SERAVICH: Absolute nonsense. Yes, I do admit that you have assisted our efforts somewhat, because even if we shaved off our whiskers, the enemy would not fall all over us to tell us a single secret. There you are a full one hundred percent better equipped. A sidelong glance, the warm touch of a breast and half the job is done.

LUCY: You barbarian! Off with you!

SERAVICH: When have those who are ready for combat been civilized? Tell me -- how many Germans have you downed with glancing shafts from your eyes?

LUCY: You mean to call me a barbarian, too, indirectly that is?

SERAVICH: And well I may. Or else why would you come forward for a task that can be done using the body as bait? I don't blame you alone, Lucy. Not only this land, but Germany, France and America -- all are in this game using female flesh to get their ends.

LUCY: Very well then. Who brought us out of our homes?

SERAVICH: This primordial earth, selfish humanity. This barbaric world that wears a mask of civilization.

LUCY: This barbaric world?

SERAVICH: Yes, a hundred times. If they were not savages, why would one band attack another? If they were not savages why would they return to primitive blood sports? Can't you see how the western world proves itself civilized by savagery? All over the world that same barbarity.

LUCY: That barbarity must be forced down by civilization. Our progress must stifle that savagery.

SERAVICH: Certainly we must. And the vanguard of the people's liberation, the Red Army, will perform that task. I find every word spoken by the Great Preceptor Lenin coming true.

LUCY: And what words did Lenin leave behind?

SERAVICH: He has said: "Remember that you live constantly within the range of the enemy's offensive. And our aim is, therefore, that the capitalist enemy will never find us unprepared."

LUCY: Well, I'll have to go now.

SERAVICH: What do you mean, "go now?"

LUCY: What else? I can't sit here listening to your flights of sentiment.

SERAVICH: Lucy, let me warn you for the last time that you will not insult me like this all the time. Please remember, I'm a general. I carry a thousand worries in my head.

LUCY: And don't I know it. The thought of the German attack makes you curl up in anxiety and fear.

SERAVICH: Fear! Of those Nazi devils? Hah!

LUCY: (Archly.) Then of me, perhaps?

SERAVICH: No, neither of you.

LUCY: Oh, really! Don't you fear me?

SERAVICH: Not at all.

LUCY: But those Nazis fear me.

SERAVICH: They are cowards. Faint-hearted cowards.

LUCY: Oh, of course. That's exactly why they are coming thousands of miles to test your strength.

SERAVICH: Let them come, let them. We'll tear the bastards to bits. They don't know the Red Army. They haven't heard the name of our dauntless Cossack cavalry.

LUCY: And you haven't heard of their "blitzkrieg!"

SERAVICH: "Blitzkrieg?" You mean the "lightning attack!" But listen carefully, when the Nazi "blitzkrieg" tactics meet the force of the Communist whirlpool you'll see how unattainable are the German hopes of conquering Russia.

LUCY: Well, we'll see. I hope you're right, of course.

(She starts to leave.)

SERAVICH: Where are you off to again? You've become very flighty!

LUCY: You know what the women spies are called?

SERAVICH: "Fireflies."

LUCY: Well, then! Fireflies are always flitting around. If we are to tempt the enemy to his death trap with our mysterious flickering beckoning of light and darkness, can we be anything but flighty?

SERAVICH: Why aren't you a lawyer?

LUCY: If I had been one, though, I'd never take up a case of yours.

SERAVICH: Impossible! (He moves away.)

LUCY: (Sings.)

No, no, no, darling,
Is it right for you to be so cross
with me night and day?
Over the stormy tempest of struggle,
I've scattered my smiles away.
A fiery lyre plays the tune
To the words of the song I sing.
Death is dressed as my bridegroom;
With raised bayonet he comes.

(She exists.)

SERAVICH: Lucy, please listen. Ever since you came to the Fifty-eighth, I've loved you. Though I know a soldier should not fall in love. Yet I love you and you don't love me, not a bit. You always try to bring me down. You don't respect my rank. Yet, I love you. Believe me, Lucy, more than my life, you --

(He turns around and sees stage empty. Expression of frustration on his face. He sighs.)

Oh stoney-hearted, ungrateful woman! Guards! Guards! Ask Dniester to come here with the wireless transmitter.

(Enter Dniester with wireless transmitter and headphones.)

SERAVICH: Get headquarters.

(Dniester sets about tuning in headquarters.)

SERAVICH: Where's your father now, Dniester?

DNIESTER: Odessa.

SERAVICH: Heard from your mother?

DNIESTER: Yes.

SERAVICH: How is she?

DNIESTER: Okay.

SERAVICH: Any news of your father?

DNIESTER: Yes. Things are bad over there. Some Trotskyites are supposed to have taken refuge over there.

SERAVICH: Hmm.

DNIESTER: Hello -- hello -- headquarters. Headquarters?

SERAVICH: Got it?

DNIESTER: Yes, got it, General.

SERAVICH: Give it to me! (Takes the microphone.) Can you hear me, [can you hear me? Number fifty-eight speaking.]

VOICE: Hello comrade! This is Field Marshal Zhukov speaking. Please give us the code. Over.

SERAVICH: General Seravich here. Lyck-seven-three-five-two. The other side is getting ready to attack. The twenty-second of June, four A.M. Inform all sectors, over.

DNIESTER: The other side -- you mean Germany?

SERAVICH: Yes, Hitler is coming to attack Russia.

DNIESTER: Hitler!

SERAVICH: Yes.

DNIESTER: Has he forgotten about Napoleon's plight in the meantime?

SERAVICH: Looks like it.

DNIESTER: Treacherous Germany.

SERAVICH: The Ten-Year Non-Aggression Pact, gone with one breath!

DNIESTER: Not just that. No declaration of war, no demands or ultimatums presented. They've fulfilled none of the protocol for an act of aggression.

SERAVICH: Well, this is what's called a surprise attack. This is the Nazi policy of barbaric Germany. We are resolved on our part to prepare an astonishing defense in every corner of the land. Their pride will have to be shattered.

DNIESTER: Perhaps they haven't heard of the Russian General Winter, haven't heard the angry roar of the swift waters of the Dnieper, Don, Volga. Perhaps they don't know of the Pripet marshlands, of the Caucasus Mountains with perilous chasms; perhaps they don't know Comrade Stalin of the Soviet High Command!

SERAVICH: Oh no, they know all that very well. But you see what has happened is that conquering half of Europe has gone straight to their heads.

DNIESTER: That is to say they won't cool down till some Russian ice is packed on their heads, right?

SERAVICH: Exactly!

DNIESTER: (Looking offstage.)

Halt -- who goes there?

(Enter Nikolai.)

NIKOLAI: Friend!

SERAVICH: Oh, Nikolai! Where are you off to in this direction?

NIKOLAI: I was coming to see you, sir.

SERAVICH: Why?

NIKOLAI: What's all this I hear! Is it true? The Germans are attacking Russia?

SERAVICH: Yes, true.

NIKOLAI: If it's true, then why are you still sitting around quietly?

SERAVICH: What would you have us do?

NIKOLAI: (Sings.)

Advance Comrade!
If you want to see the sun rise
And unleash the storm
In your two hands, gun and bayonet
You must hold firm.
Fly the blood-red banner
Workers who toil,
You will rule this earth
Filled with life's joy
Come soldier, come comrade,
In factory and in farm.

(All exit, marching.)

Act I, Scene 3

(Enter Hitler, Goering, Von Bock speaking among themselves.)

HITLER: Impossible? Impossible? Impossible! No, there's no such word in Hitler's dictionary. Adolf Hitler is the Führer of Germany only to make the impossible possible! The Nazi Army that swept over Europe, like the storms of doom, beginning in Poland in 1939, has attacked today a Russia that is isolated and disunited --

VON BOCK: Russia may be isolated, but the geographical conditions of the terrain we are about to invade are not too favorable, mein Herr.

GOERING: And moreover --

HITLER: Ugh! I hope you gentlemen will not forget that all this that you tell me or wish to tell me now, is not unknown to me.

And Marshal Von Bock, it is sad for me to have to remind an experienced tactician like you, that no one opens a campaign hoping that every battlefield will be favorable to him.

VON BOCK: I am sorry, mein Herr!

HITLER: Never mind. Now, these are my orders. Following the well-known aggressive traditions of our army, the Nazi troops will cover the horizons of Soviet Russia like a swarm of locusts. At exactly four in the morning, the attack will be signalled by a rain of bombs by the Luftwaffe. And behind this protective screen, the German tanks and armor will advance, destroying their defensive positions, gentlemen.

GOERING: As I see it, the attack then will be the most intense in the central sector.

HITLER: Without any doubt. The chief objective is to destroy the nerve-center of Soviet military strength by swiftly occupying Moscow. By the first week of July, the Soviet High Command will have to acknowledge before the world that their capital and the entire sub-continent has been conquered by the undefeated Nazi Army of Hitler, the conqueror of the world.

(He exits.)

VON BOCK: And are there no further orders from you, Marshal? Or further recriminations? I have grown old collecting experience. Sometimes I forget which is heavier, my age or the experience.

GOERING: You don't yet understand the character of our great Führer. Whenever he undertakes a plan, he even determines the day it will be completed. Our job is not to raise questions, but to give it shape and --

VON BOCK: -- sacrifice our lives!

GOERING: And how many times have you sacrificed you life so far, Marshal? Don't fear, we all taste of death but once -- when life abandons us. And that day will come when it will come, not a day early, not a day late.

VON BOCK: Are you reciting Shakespeare, Marshal Goering?

GOERING: No! I've never read Shakespeare. I speak from my ordinary experience. Perhaps Shakespeare used similar words. In that case, one may say that we think alike. We are both geniuses. He was a genius and I am about to become one.

(Both laugh, when Blunstein enters carrying some posters. They stop laughing abruptly.)

BLUNSTEIN: Heil Hitler!

GOERING & VON BOCK: Heil Hitler!

BLUNSTEIN: I have brought some samples of the prints you ordered of the Honorable Führer's speeches, Marshal.

(Goering and Von Bock examine the posters.)

GOERING: How many have been printed?

BLUNSTEIN: Three hundred thousand. Two and a half will be air-dropped all over Germany. And fifty thousand will be put up in every German military camp.

GOERING: Excellent work! Well then, put up the posters on the walls of this camp as quick as you can, so that the Führer can see posters of his speech when he comes here tomorrow morning.

BLUNSTEIN: Heil Hitler!

GOERING & VON BOCK: Heil Hitler!

(Exit Goering and Von Bock. Blunstein unrolls a poster and goes about putting it up. Sees Barbara coming and stops with a cheerful expression on his face. Barbara tries to pass him by without stopping.)

BLUNSTEIN: Barbara! (Barbara stops.) Barbara, are you angry because I didn't answer your letter? Listen, Barbara!

BARBARA: Your worries are baseless, Blunstein. I haven't asked you for explanations. So what if you don't write? I ought to be satisfied with this -- that we run into each other occasionally, this way. Who knows when you will be called away? You'll go off to the front. Perhaps --

BLUNSTEIN: Please, Barbara. Let me speak. Look, this war won't last long. Three weeks at the most! Right after that we can go back home. Then you'll see, on the first leave I get, you and I'll --

BARBARA: What's that paper in your hand?

BLUNSTEIN: This one? This is a portion of a speech made by our Honorable Führer. This poster has been distributed to every corner of the country. There are directions at the bottom -- anyone finding one is to display it in a public place.

BARBARA: Can you give one to me?

BLUNSTEIN: Of course! Why only one? You can take them all. There are

Many, many more. Three hundred thousand have been printed. Hey! What are you going to do with them?

BARBARA: Give them to my little mistress, since Miss Eva thinks of mein Herr as of a divine incarnation. She'll probably keep this in a gold frame. And oh yes, Blunstein! Will you please read this aloud to me -- what it says?

BLUNSTEIN: Of course, why not? Listen -- hey! You can read it yourself.

BARBARA: So what? You read it. Hearing it from your lips will seem like hearing it from the lips of the Führer himself.

(Blunstein draws Barbara to him affectionately, and opening the poster declaims.)

BLUNSTEIN: (Reads.) "My Nazi friends, my German brothers! Each one of you is an unforgettable, burning expression of the martial genius of Greater Germany. Let your ardent genius shine forth on the political sky of every proud nation of the world. Go forth and announce the great central truth of Aryan Kultur to the empire of non-Aryans. With the proud stride of your upraised feet --"

(They see Maurice and Bucher approach talking between themselves, and quickly separate and pretend to put up posters. Bucher whistles once at Barbara when Maurice stops him, pointing toward Blunstein. The two go out in the opposite direction from which they came. Blunstein and Barbara quickly get back together and Blunstein resumes his reading.)

BLUNSTEIN: (Reads.) "With the proud stride of your upraised feet, make the distant world of stars shiver. Let the swelling concert of the League of Nations become silenced at your single united battle cry."

(Sound of military commands offstage, and the sound of a squad of marching soldiers coming to a halt. Blunstein and Barbara separate hurriedly. Then, finding no one coming in their direction, they come together again.)

BLUNSTEIN: (Reads.) " In the near future the single empire to be raised over all Europe will be called Germany. The single race that will control the system of domination over this continent will be the Germans. All men over the entire world will salute each other with a single phrase -- and that is *Heil Hitler!*"

(Seeing Maurice come in the distance, Barbara hurriedly says good-bye.)

BARBARA: Look, that fellow's coming this way again. I'll take off.

(As soon as Maurice has crossed the stage hurriedly from one side to another, Blunstein calls.)

BLUNSTEIN:	Barbara!

(Re-enter Barbara, running.)

BARBARA:	Did you call me?
BLUNSTEIN:	Yes -- uh, what was I going to say? -- Oh yes, won't you take these for the mistress?
BARBARA:	Oh yes, yes. Thanks.
BLUNSTEIN:	Barbara --
BARBARA:	Hey, here comes another one.

(Barbara swiftly goes almost out. Bucher crosses the stage quickly and goes out. Barbara runs back again.)

BARBARA:	Er, what were you saying?
BLUNSTEIN:	I was saying -- I mean, saying --

(As they shyly come together, a whistle is heard offstage. They jump in opposite directions and go off hurriedly.)

Act I, Scene 4

(Enter Stalin walking alone.)

STALIN:	The 22nd of June, the 22nd of June. Only another twenty-four hours till the start of the worst infamy of Aryan Kultur. Lenin, Great Preceptor! Comrade Lenin! I don't know how far I've been able to obey your commands. This is a second crisis in Soviet Russia's history, after 1920. Treacherous Germany, scoffing at the non-aggression pact, seeks to consume Russia.

(Enter Zhukov, salutes.)

ZHUKOV:	And we are ready to smash that upraised hood of the Nazis, comrade.
STALIN:	Comrade Lenin has taught us to do that indeed, Marshal Zhukov. And we have taken an oath that the invader will never find us unprepared.
ZHUKOV:	And haven't we kept our oath, comrade?
STALIN:	Yes, we have. And it is only because we have that we can face Europe's greatest threat with confidence.

ZHUKOV: All Europe today fears the all-conquering Nazi policy of Germany. Yet they envy our progress. The wealth of Russia's harvests, minerals, industry, and especially our Communism has become a matter of fear and envy for the capitalist nations. And it is because of that, that Nazi Germany has dared to attack Russia.

STALIN: There would have been little delay in ending her smug dreams if we hadn't joined hands with her in occupying Poland.

ZHUKOV: What connection can there be between this German offensive and Poland?

STALIN: The connection is with Germany, not Poland. Because Germany has already annexed all states on the northwest frontier of Russia, except Poland. Between us and Germany there is Poland. That's why when we jointly defeated Poland and divided it up between ourselves, it became simple for Germany to arrive at our frontier. But there was no other way but this.

ZHUKOV: You have acted correctly, for even if we had not entered the Polish campaign, Germany would have annexed Poland and as a result arrived at the Russian frontier. Instead, we've gained this much, that while Germany appropriates our part of Poland, we've had time to gather more strength.

STALIN: That's true. We are about to adopt the strategy of defensive warfare to repulse the German attack. But if the opportunity presents itself -- our generals should not hesitate to counterattack.

ZHUKOV: It'll be so, comrade.

STALIN: I can't predict how far we can stand the initial onslaught of the Germans, because Russian topography will allow the enemy free entrance on the one hand and mechanized mobility thereafter. We must remember that on this front that extends from the Baltic to the Black Sea, wherever we concentrate troops on one front, the enemy will advance with strength on another.

ZHUKOV: That is, unless we can draw Germany into Russia, and compel her to mass all her strength in one battle, it will be impossible to destroy her all-consuming dream.

STALIN: Exactly. But we won't therefore fail to oppose. When we withdraw into the interior after apparently failing to withstand the attack, our generals will adopt the "scorched earth" policy. The enemy must not be allowed to collect a single ounce of grain from the conquered towns. The machinery from the factories, the harvest in the granaries, the animals in the farmyards -- the enemy must have nothing. Bridges, railways, paved highways -- all links from the conquered towns must be destroyed.

ZHUKOV: Our guerrillas are expert enough at that. Moreover, our volunteers have been trained in this, too.

STALIN: I am grateful for your foresight, Marshal Zhukov!

ZHUKOV: Have you seen the chart about the "Suicide Column" that was sent to you?

STALIN: Yes, I've seen it. I've seen it and been astonished. I had never expected a hundred thousand troops to join this self-destructive division.

ZHUKOV: This is nothing unexpected, comrade. The names are only the volunteers from the announcement made two days ago. If there had been time, more names would have swelled the list of suicide troops.

STALIN: Then there is nothing to fear, comrade. I have a prophetic vision about the invincibility of Russia. This country where every human being is willing to volunteer to die for the Motherland -- no power on earth can shackle such a Motherland.

ZHUKOV: And, moreover, Russia is a mother of heroes. No power on earth can swallow and digest the land where the military geniuses of the century, Marshal Stalin, General Chuikov, General Vatutin and others are born.

(Enter a soldier. Salutes and gives a piece of paper to Zhukov.)

ZHUKOV: (Looking at the paper.) A lady wants to see you, comrade!

STALIN: Ask her to come in, Marshal!

ZHUKOV: Allow her to come in. (Exit soldier.) Was it appropriate to allow an unknown lady to come in here?

STALIN: I've done nothing incorrect, Marshal! You forget, Marshal, that I came from a family of farm workers as common as the one who wants to see us. Hear what she has to say. In our present crisis, even a lady's opinion is worthwhile.

ZHUKOV: If --

STALIN: -- she is an assassin, then our lives will be in danger, right? But if you believe that the guards will let her come in here without searching her, then we must conclude that their days with the military have been spent in vain.

(Enter Muniya.)

MUNIYA: Comrade, *Zindābād!*

ZHUKOV: Where do you come from?

MUNIYA: From Tula.

STALIN: Now, tell me why.

MUNIYA: To see you. I had seen you only once in my life. When you stopped in Tula on your way from inspecting the factory at Kharkov. There were streaming crowds on both sides of the road. They noisily cheered you on, waving. And your car, with its top down, lurched forward on the highway. And you standing there, greeting everyone in Tula with a smile. Everyone young and old, man, woman or child. That was the only time I saw you. And at once I blessed you with the tears of my eyes. May your victorious progress be ever successful. May Comrade Stalin, Russia's priceless jewel, be immortal.

STALIN: Sister, tell me what I can do for you.

MUNIYA: Not for me, for Russia.

STALIN: Yes, what must I do?

MUNIYA: You are the elder brother of every working man in Russia, his friend, his comrade. You are the disciple of *Mahāmati* Lenin. To you I have only one prayer -- enroll me in the ranks of your Suicide Column.

ZHUKOV: What? There is no room for a woman in the Suicide Column!

MUNIYA: How can you object?

STALIN: Moreover -- your age.

MUNIYA: This body is old, but is the mind also aged?

ZHUKOV: But it is essential to be physically strong, just as much as being strong in spirit. Heavy mines have to be carried to the doorstep of enemy camps. Huge sacks of explosives have to be borne secretly and scattered all over enemy lines. Batteries of heavy howitzers have to be placed according to orders. These tasks are not possible for an old woman like you.

MUNIYA: Old! Who says I am old? Because my hair is graying, because my skin hangs loose, do you think I am old? I can still cycle non-stop for fifty miles. I can go on horseback for a hundred. I've never missed my mark with a rifle.

STALIN: Agreed, agreed. But why do you want to volunteer for death like this?

MUNIYA: Because I am from a family of fighters. My father went to the war in 1920 and died. My husband died fighting for victory in Poland. My two sons have joined the Red Army. One is in the Crimea, defending Fort Sevastopol, and the other is in Lyck. My daughter, Karuma, was married in Astrakhan. Yesterday I heard that she joined the Women's Division. The spell of battle is in my blood. Can I ever keep away from the fight?

STALIN: But this war is not like any other war. This is the best war in history. Its form will spread over the whole world. Its speed will be swifter than lightning; its hunger will consume the earth!

MUNIYA: And that is why, even at fifty, I have come to worship its holy, pure image.

STALIN: Go, sister. I'll accept your request. You will receive my orders in due time.

MUNIYA: *Zindābād*, Comrade! May you live long, Stalin!

(Exit Muniya.)

ZHUKOV: Astounding!

STALIN: There is nothing to be amazed about, comrade. You will see events even more strange after the twenty-second of June. If any truly love the land, it is such as these. If the native land is a Mother, then these are her true children. Yet the whip of unbridled czarist tyranny always lashed them mercilessly. Trotsky's wiles have killed such as these, more than any other. But the czar is past, that accursed "Moscow Trial" is past, yet they have no peace. Comrade, I have not been able yet to bring smiles to their faces!

ZHUKOV: I am sorry, comrade.

STALIN: This shame is not yours, comrade. It is mine. Perhaps the Trotsky gang is grinning in mockery, from the other world. Perhaps Lenin's unfulfilled soul has lost faith in me.

ZHUKOV: Comrade! We still haven't discussed anything about our forces.

STALIN: Oh yes! Listen carefully! What little information we have about the war mobilization of Germany, you must know. For our own mobilization has been based on that information

ZHUKOV: Yes, comrade.

STALIN: In the Russian offensive, about eight million German military and non-military personnel are about to engage in a life and death struggle. We have news from our agents that they are deploying around a hundred and fifty divisions on three fronts over the same area. They don't have more than twelve thousand troops in each division. We are putting fourteen thousand in some places, sixteen thousand in others.

ZHUKOV: They will undoubtedly have reserve troops as well?

STALIN: So do we, because we aren't using the Cossack soldiers now.

ZHUKOV: But let's not overlook the fact, comrade, that tank war was their trump card in the West European campaign.

STALIN: Absolutely. And that's why I've ordered the strike brigades to use anti-tank guns more extensively.

ZHUKOV: Well, I must start now, comrade!

STALIN: Goodbye. You still have a five hundred mile journey before you.

ZHUKOV: Moreover, the troops are eager and impatient. They only wait for the order. Long live the Revolution!

STALIN: Long live the Revolution!

(Exit Zhukov.)

STALIN: Where will the attack be most intense? In the north or the south? In the Leningrad or in the Ukraine region? No, it will be around Moscow, naturally. Because it won't be unnatural for them to presume that the fall of the capital, Moscow, means the fall of Russia. (Suddenly laughs aloud.) Hitler! This is not Italy -- this is Russia. And I am not Mussolini -- I am Comrade Stalin!

(Exit.)

Act I, Scene 5

(Enter Eva, irritation and excitement in her expression.)

EVA: Stalin -- Stalin -- Stalin! That man will drive me mad. Because of him I've lost all joy, all peace, and sleep has left Hitler's eyes. If someone were to bring that beast in bonds before me, before Eva Braun, I'd see what that proud barbarian has to boast of, that he has dared to attempt to stop the greatest military genius in history!

(Enter Barbara, smiling and talking as she enters.)

BARBARA: What's all this ranting and raving about so early in the morning? Whatever's the matter with you?

EVA: Bother if I know what's the matter.

BARBARA: You astonish me, miss.

EVA: Yes -- and everyone's saying that!

BARBARA: What *are* they saying?

EVA: "How astonishing!" That's what they say. If I raise my voice, they think I am rehearsing my part! I love Hitler, I love mein Herr -- they say this is my play-acting. Leaving the lap of peace, I've come running after mein Herr. They say I've come to see the show! Tell me, Barbara, don't you find these things astonishing?

BARBARA: Perhaps they have never loved anyone, that's why they talk. But let them. How long will they gossip? They'll talk and talk and then grow silent one day.

EVA: Yes, they will stop, but only when they've been lined up and shot and not before. Oh! What can I do? I am prevented. Mein Herr has forbidden me, or I'd have stopped their mouths even now.

BARBARA: Your lunch is ready, miss.

EVA: Barbara, do you love anyone?

BARBARA: Don't know if I still do. But I did once.

EVA: Was he good looking?

BARBARA: A lover is always beautiful to the woman who loves!

EVA: And what was his name, dear?

BARBARA: Blunstein.

EVA: You loved him a lot, didn't you?

BARBARA: Uh huh --

EVA: Yet you left him?

BARBARA: He left me before I left him, miss.

EVA: Quarrelled, did you?

BARBARA:	Quarrelled? Not that --
EVA:	Then?
BARBARA:	He's a hero. He's a warrior. Do a woman's tears mean anything to a warrior?
EVA:	I understand. Perhaps mein Herr wants to tell me the same thing in another way.
BARBARA:	What?
EVA:	Whenever I've spoken to him of marriage, he says, first the race, the nation, first the fulfillment of the solemn resolve, and after that, marriage. Are these men of flesh and blood? I just don't understand, Barbara. Sometimes I suspect that mein Herr despises me because I'm an actress. Yet the next moment he covers me with kisses.
HITLER:	(Offstage.) Eva! Eva!
EVA:	There, there he comes --
BARBARA:	I'll go then, miss. Please don't be late, dear. Lunch will get cold.
EVA:	Oh the poor darling!

(Enter Hitler, talking happily as he advances rapidly and spins Eva around once.)

HITLER:	Eva! Eva! Only another thirty-five miles. Only another thirty-five miles.
EVA:	Let me go, let me go. Someone will see us.
HITLER:	Let them see. Let my happiness fill their minds to the brim. Only another thirty-five miles, another thirty-five miles away. The Moscow of my dreams, the Moscow of the desires of Greater Germany, stands beckoning, calling! I can't express the exaltation I feel.
EVA:	Mein Herr!
HITLER:	What was the line that you recited as Cleopatra, Eva? Say it, say it once more -- what? What was the line --
EVA:	"Give me my robe put on my crown, I have Immortal longings in me."
HITLER:	"I have immortal longings in me." Oh, if that Shakespeare

had been born a German, I'd have built a golden mausoleum to his memory.

EVA: Are your longings fulfilled, mein Herr?

HITLER: Truly fulfilled, Eva. Once a beggar, now I'm king. I've sold pictures on street corners. I've spent the night lying on the snow on the sidewalk. I've been hod-carrier to a mason. I've fought as a private on the battlefield. I've drowned myself in the gamble of politics. A half century of my life has passed, dreaming of a Greater Germany. And yet -- yet, I have no satisfaction.

EVA: Then it is profitless to advance, mein Herr. Stop the irresistible storm of your advance now. Rest now.

HITLER: Rest! Impossible, Eva, impossible. When midst untiring labor drowsiness descends, Germany shouts in reproach "Hitler!" Sleep vanishes. When between the gaps of thought the "I" of the past plays chiaroscuro games with the "I" of the present, Germany roars, "Hitler!" All sport stops. When lost in the joy of victory I rush to you for rest, Germany hisses "Hitler!" And love vanishes.

EVA: Mein Herr! Please be calm, mein Herr!

HITLER: And that's why I rush out to the battle forgetting everything. Tanks, mines, howitzers, mortars, bombers, dynamite, rifles roar in unison! Eight million soldiers rejoice as one -- "Heil Hitler!"

EVA: The whole world is startled by that roar.

HITLER: And I -- ha ha ha! -- explode in laughter. But I don't find my heart consenting in that laugh. I don't find the throb of life.

EVA: Mein Herr! The more I see you, the more I lose myself. Even I, articulate actress that I am, become speechless in joy and wonder. I don't understand what it is that you want.

HITLER: Neither do I know, myself. Only one thing I know -- all Europe will be named Germany. And only one name will be inscribed in letters of blood in the pages of the history of the world -- "Hitler."

EVA: Your dream is my dream too, mein Herr. But it hurts me so to hear the world say that Hitler has gone mad, that you are a megalomaniac.

HITLER: But they do not know that the earth can change the direction of its revolution, but Hitler's mind will never decay. Megalomaniac, eh? Hitler a megalomaniac? And is that why De Gaulle ran away? And Churchill waits with a fluttering heart? And Roosevelt fearfully sends treaty proposals, lest this megalomaniac's mania explode like a bomb on their heads? And that is how it will be, too. First, let me crush Stalin's ribs with his own hammer. Then I'll fix Roosevelt and Churchill.

EVA: Your words frighten me so, mein Herr -- oh so much.

HITLER: Eva! I rush to you from the battlefield, do you know why? For the warmth of youth. The youthfulness of your thirty-five years rushes like the Rhine through the veins of the fifty-year-old Hitler. The thundering waves of this reawakened Germany are clamoring at the concert of the world. "Fear" is today in my grip, the "impossible" is trod underfoot.

EVA: Yet I'll entreat you, for the sake of the future of our wedded life, rein in your dreams of global conquest. The death-rattle of the world can be heard. All nations send up thousand upon thousand of curses for your destruction each moment.

HTILER: They are helpless, and they send only proof of that. A curse is the only weapon of the helpless. And the only consolation of the weak is 'mercy.' No, in my world, in the Greater Germany of my dreams, there is no room for the weak.

EVA: But who will enjoy it?

HITLER: Only the choicest youth of the world will inherit it. Such as will despise cowards, mock beggars, and keep foreign nations under their mastery. I will build all Germany into a vast land of heroes.

EVA: There's no harm in doing all that. But have you once looked at yourself, mein Herr, looked at me? Where is your splendid grace today? I don't see that disease has delayed to come in fear of your despotic strength.

HITLER: It's too late, Eva! Really too late. The beautiful years of life passed in preparing the field. But still I am not frightened. Hitler's glory will remain shining above disease, decay and death.

EVA: Day after day, news of each victory used to add a year to my life. It used to be a happy thought, then, that I was the helpmate of a world-conquering hero, for whom I left the State Theater in Munich and rushed to the King's Square in Berlin. But your mad intoxication with world domination now ignores my heart's desire, the demands of my flesh.

HITLER: Eva!

EVA: Again and again you postpone the date of our marriage with a series of excuses. While the Bolshevik-hater Hitler rages in battle against the Nazi-hating Stalin, do you know that a trifling actress from Munich is being torn apart by the pains of life and youth here inside the Nazi camp in Berlin?

HITLER Eva --

EVA: How can you understand? How can you, you imperialist? Rather than these pains, it is far better to throw oneself on the enemy's cannons; yes, far more soothing.

HITLER: Patience, just a little patience, Eva! Believe me, that day is near when all Eurpoe will throb with tremendous joy at our marriage. Gifts and tribute will come from nations far and near. Indeed, like Cleopatra, you will call your attendant maids and say, "Give me my robe, put on my crown."

EVA: Mein Herr!

HITLER: Wait just these few days, Eva. Only let Moscow fall into my hands.

EVA: Good, I will remain waiting -- remain in inpatient eagerness for news of your victory. May the first chance to give you the victor's garland be mine.

HITLER: It will be so, Eva, it will -- but why is there no news yet?

EVA: Wherever you are, if news arrives it will find you. Lunch is ready, come and eat --

(Enter Goering.)

GOERING: May I come in, mein Herr? Good morning! Good morning, madam.

HITLER: What news, Marshal Goering? Why this delay?

EVA: Good morning, Marshal. I'll say good-bye for now.

(Exit.)

GOERING: Leningrad is still in a state of siege.

HITLER: Field Marshal Von Rundstedt?

GOERING: Has crossed the River Dnieper and started for Rostov.

HITLER: Starting is not enough -- one must conquer, and occupy. I will have no other news but "Victory." Because I want the whole of Russia under Germany before the November snows.

GOERING: Marshal Von Bock has doubts about this matter.

HITLER Doubts! Marshal Von Bock's! What says Von Bock?

GOERING: He believes it is impossible to occupy Moscow before winter.

HITLER: Impossible! Again the same word! No -- I must have Moscow, at any cost, and before winter. Announce this, that if Moscow is conquered within three days, all troops on the Russian front will be given a week's leave. And not only that -- they will have permission to enjoy any woman caught in Russia for that entire leave.

GOERING: Have you had a word with Marshal Von Bock in the meantime?

HITELR: I have indeed.

GOERING: What news does he send, may I ask?

HITLER: He has said that Moscow is within thirty-five miles of us.

GOERING: I feel that we will have to stop within those thirty-five miles.

HITLER: We will have to stop! Why?

GOERING: Fifty-one divisions are densely packed into an area considerably restricted among them. There isn't even room for our tanks to advance. Such a situation has so evolved out of the mixing of friend and foe that no one even dares to make a charge with bayonets.

HITLER: Babies -- babies! Their military strategy is still not past infancy. Marshal Goering!

GOERING: Speak, mein Herr!

HITLER: From this instant I am taking over command of the troops in the Moscow sector. Send a message to Rundstedt that he should conquer the Crimea by way of Rostov and advance on the Volga towards Stalingrad.

GOERING: Good, I'll send the message right away.

(Salutes and exits.)

HITLER: Russia! I will sell you like chattel in the marketplaces of the world. The Swastika of my Germany will fly on the top of your Kremlin Palace. Dawn and dusk, you will mouth only one phrase: "Heil Hitler! Heil Hitler!"

(Exit.)

Act I, Scene 6

(Tumult of battle. Enter Petroslavsky, rifle in hand. Looks in all directions and finds all is clear.)

PETROSLAVSKY: Open Sesame! The gates are open. Get in quick, before I shut them tight. Heavens, here they come! Save yourself, daddy -- run, run, pure and simple, r-u-u-u-u-n!

(Enter Bucher from the opposite direction, bayonet at the ready, charging.)

BUCHER: Ch-a-a-a-r-ge!

PETROSLAVSKY: Oy! Oy! Stop, stop!

BUCHER: Ch-a-a-a-h-h

PETROSLAVSKY: Oy! What's all this gruntin' and groanin'?

BUCHER: h-h-h-a-a-rge hup!

PETROSLAVSKY: Ever seen an ape? Eh, an ape?

BUCHER: An ape? Whatever is an ape?

PETROSLAVSKY: Looks just like you. Swings around the tree tops of India, Burma and Ceylon and about as clever as a rice-husker.

BUCHER: Husker?

PETROSLAVSKY: Thar he goes again! Oh, my precipitate *cucurbita*.

BUCHER: *Cu-cu-cur* -- Is that Indian, too?

PETROSLAVSKY: Yes, a very genuine Indian pumpkin. Come over and visit us after the war's over. We've three gorgeous ones hanging from the rafters. Dniester's mother will cook them for you, okay?

BUCHER: You're trying to be funny, huh?

PETROSLAVSKY: With shells flyin' all around! You think anyone would dare to be funny now, or that anyone would want to? Move over, son, got to get going.

BUCHER: You are a Russian: no, you are a barbarian!

PETROSLAVSKY: Barbarian! You mean *I* am a barbarian? Who do you think you are, calling us Russians barbarians? Here's a *maulvī* come from Mecca itself! Go! Go a little further that way and say it, if you dare. They'll make a sieve out of the front of your coat.

BUCHER: Achtung!

PETROSLAVSKY: Your horoscopes are being fixed. We've laid four thousand mines around you. I'll just wave from here and boom!

BUCHER: Ah, now -- you've been laying mines, have you? And you're the messenger? Then I must teach you a very special lesson.

PETROSLAVSKY: Ho ho ho! Now don't make me laugh, dear child. We learn from you, indeed?

BUCHER: Yes, a very special lesson. Ch-a-a-a-a-r-ge!

(Bucher charges with bayonet. A bullet strikes his arm from the rear and he drops his gun with a shriek.)

BUCHER: Achtung! Land mines!

(Bucher runs offstage. Petroslavsky picks up Bucher's rifle.)

PETROSLAVSKY: Boy, oh boy! That would have been the end of me, that would -- if this bayonet had entered my belly! My insides would have come out with a whoosh. But who fired that shot? Ho -- Dniester!

(Enter Dniester carrying a rifle. As usual -- a field radio strapped to his back.)

DNIESTER: Father, you here?

PETROSLAVSKY: Dniester, are you still alive?

DNIESTER: I cannot die, father, not now. I've got to survive. The enemy has crossed the Dnieper on the southern front. Kerch is occupied. The impregnable Sevastopol is in enemy hands. Do we have the time to die now, father?

(Sound of a formation of bombers approaching overhead.)

PETROSLAVSKY: Dniester!

DNIESTER: Bombers! Get down, get down!

(Both fling themselves on the ground. Sound of bombs being dropped, and the answering fire of ack-ack guns.)

PETROSLAVSKY: Death above, death below. Right and left, in front and behind -- death has his paws out all around.

DNIESTER: Father! Have you ever seen a sight like this anywhere in the world? The horror of death everywhere. Oh Hitler!

(The strains of Nikolai's song offstage.)

NIKOLAI: (Singing.)

Soldier! Shed fear!
I have killed Death.
Who do you now fear?

PETROSLAVSKY: Who is that singing, circled by a net of fire?

DNIESTER: Nikolai.

PETROSLAVSKY: Does he have no fear at all?

DNIESTER: Didn't you hear, he has killed Death. His song revives half dead soldiers. He is a million men all by himself. Today you see him in Moscow, tomorrow in the Crimea, in Leningrad the day after.

PETROSLAVSKY: Such as these have done something for their country. I remained that worthless precipitate cucurbita of the Indian logicians.

(Suddenly enter Nikolai accompanied by the roar of heavy guns.)

NIKOLAI: (Singing.)

A thousand planes roar,
Flashing, the cannons spurt flame
With breathless haste
The tanks rush on
And, ah, the brutal rifle!

DNIESTER: Nikolai!

NIKOLAI: (Singing.)

Today is not a day for words, comrade.
It's the day to take an oath.
With the enemy's blood you will tinge,
Your gleaming bayonet.
Oh, Red Guard, with your grenade,
Wipe out the Germans!

DNIESTER: What is the position in the city, Nikolai?

NIKOLAI: No one has had a drop of water to drink for the last ten days. The citizens are hiding in the underground tunnels panting in anxiety.

DNIESTER: Ah, Hitler!

NIKOLAI: Thousands of loudspeakers all over Russia announce the message of the High Command from the Headquarters. The whole world is watching this, the biggest battle in history. If anyone does not do his duty in this war, or fails to show worthiness in even one instance, then Russia will never forgive those self-savers, nor acknowledge them as her sons and daughters. Therefore, beware!

(Exit.)

DNIESTER: There is no need for your words, Nikolai! No need at all. Every man and woman in Russia is brought up with the motherland's revolutionary history. They do not have homes, no families, no rest, nor need for sorrow at the loss of dear ones, nor the time for a sigh. In palace and factory, at the hearth or at the gate, in courtyard and balcony, in the towns or in the country, in farms and on the highways, there is only one pledge, "Kill or be killed!"

(Starts to go.)

PETROSLAVSKY: Dniester!

DNIESTER: There is no time, father, no time. Can't you see, father, what waves at us from the play of fire in the sky; don't you hear what whispers from the hissing wind? Can't you feel the frightened call in the trembling of the earth under our feet? They all speak in a chorus, "Dniester!" Be ready, time's running out.

PETROSLAVSKY: Dniester --

DNIESTER: Farewell, father, farewell! We'll probably never meet again. If Russia dies, so will I. But even then, I'll have the consolation that I died for my land.

(Exit.)

PETROSLAVSKY: Oh what joy even in death! As if the struggle were to decide who is to die first. As if the race was to see who could pour out more blood. Hitler! There is still time for you to escape! Or else this tide of blood you called up will sweep you away.

(Maurice, dying of thirst, stumbles onto the stage, near Petroslavsky's feet.)

MAURICE: Water! Do you have any water?

PETROSLAVSKY: Water? What for?

MAURICE: Oh, I'm so thirsty. Water, do you have any water?

PETROSLAVSKY: Yes, I have water indeed. Two whole lakes of water. But very salty.

MAURICE: That's all right. My chest is exploding. Tell me, where is the lake?

PETROSLAVSKY: (Pointing to his eyes.)

Look, here they are. Dig them up and cart both of them away. Keep one for yourself and give the other one to your Hitler. He is very thirsty, too.

MAURICE: Oh! Then you are a Russian.

PETROSLAVSKY: Oh, what a shame. Isn't your head lost in the dust yet? You begged water of a Russian -- you will go to hell when you die; just think about that!

MAURICE: What are you doing here?

PETROSLAVSKY: Now that's really nice. That you should find Russians in Russia strikes you as odd?

MAURICE: You are astoundingly discourteous.

PETROSLAVSKY: Couldn't you remember to bring a few bushels of courtesy when you left Germany?

(Maurice snarls and lunges at him. Petroslavsky turns away with a look of distaste.)

PETROSLAVSKY: Echh! *Precipitate cucurbita pepo!* Absolutely inedible, absolutely!

(Exit Petroslavsky. Sound of a tremendous explosion.)

MAURICE: Wh-wh-at's that? What are those sappers doing there?

(Enter Blunstein.)

BLUNSTEIN: They are putting down land mines.

MAURICE: Why are they dragging those corpses?

BLUNSTEIN: They are ripping open corpses and hiding mines inside them. When the scavenging dogs and jackals drag them towards the German lines at night, they will explode.

MAURICE: What?

BLUNSTEIN: Not only that, do you remember the tale about the battle of Troy?

MAURICE: What exactly?

BLUNSTEIN: When the Greeks saw that they could not take Troy, they made a wooden horse and hid some soldiers inside, and pretended to leave. The Trojans thought the Greeks were fleeing. And then they brought the horse into Troy as a prize of victory.

MAURICE: Yes, yes, I understand. But what has the wooden horse got to do with this?

BLUNSTEIN: The Russians have filled their water tanks with explosives and tricked us. Just a little while ago when we fired a rifle shot hoping to destroy their water supply, a water-tank exploded wiping out an entire detachment of ours. A handful of us somehow survived.

MAURICE: Oh --

BLUNSTEIN: I have to make a report, goodbye!

MAURICE: Hey, Blunstein, I got to see Barbara at headquarters.

BLUNSTEIN: Oh -- I see. (Starts to leave.)

MAURICE: She gave me a letter for you.

BLUNSTEIN: I'll take it later, keep it for now.

(Exit Blunstein.)

MAURICE: Unbelievable! A letter from a sweetheart on the battlefield. After so long a separation, seeing the writing of her own hand a soldier forgets hunger, thirst, even death. And this guy didn't even bother to see it once. Are these men or brutish beasts? But, oh water, where can I find a drop to drink? I can't bear it anymore. There's no solution but to rob one of our own men of his canteen.

(Exit Maurice. Enter Seravich carefully inspecting the area with his field-glasses. Dniester and the wireless pack are with him. His inspection completed, Seravich prepares to report through the wireless.)

SERAVICH: Hello! Hello! Field Marshal, General Seravich reporting. Over.

(Zhukov's voice over the wireless: "This is Field Marshal Zhukov. Over.")

SERAVICH: Our troops are falling every moment for lack of water.

VOICE: The battlefield is not a place of ease. Keep pressing forward --

SERAVICH: The enemy has regrouped in a triangle over the hill.

VOICE: How far away?

SERAVICH: About two hundred and fifty yards.

VOICE: Ask the troops to advance another hundred yards.

(Seravich starts calling out orders over the wireless.)

SERAVICH: Platoon 3, Platoon 4, Platoon 7, this is General Seravich. Advance another hundred yards from the south and the west -- They are advancing in formation, Marshal.

VOICE: Who's covering you?

SERAVICH: The M.M.G. troop. From the top of the rise.

VOICE: Give an order to shoot on sight. Over.

SERAVICH: Attention! Platoon 3 and Platoon 7 -- orders to fire on opportunity after sighting the enemy. Over.

(A shell lands very close. Seravich and Dniester tumble to the ground. Dniester gets up the next instant and moves to another corner. Seravich is also moving when the running form of Lucy rushes into him. He grabs hold of her.)

SERAVICH: Lucy! What are you doing here?

LUCY: I have to deliver a message.

SERAVICH: What message?

LUCY: They have manufactured star shells. They will search out our troop positions by firing them at night.

SERAVICH: Where are you going?

LUCY: To Camp Seventeen.

SERAVICH: Don't go now, you'll be killed. Can't you see the spreading wave of death in front?

LUCY: There is no way out, General. I have to swim through that spreading wave. After informing Camp Seventeen, I have to return to the German camp.

SERAVICH: What? They will tear you to pieces if they catch you.

LUCY: I have been in that camp all these days.

SERAVICH: What do you have to do there?

LUCY: Some days I have to dance, on others I've to sing, or cook special dishes for them. Occasionally I have to rub their backs when they are tired.

SERAVICH: Lucy!

LUCY: I am everyone's darling in that camp. There's one German who won't let a single day pass without a kiss from me.

SERAVICH: Lucy!

LUCY: What's wrong now?

SERAVICH: I am not accustomed to hearing such things. Go where you're going.

LUCY: Oh, please don't be cross. I know you love me. But don't you know how much I love you? Our country is in peril now. She must be freed, by whatever means. So if I don't carry on with them, I won't be able to gather any information at all. Don't despise me. If the land is freed from danger, and if I live till then, your Lucy will remain yours. Try to forget my hateful existence, thinking of the country. I must go now. Goodbye for today.

(Exit Lucy.)

SERAVICH: Oh, Lucy has won over me. Lucy has -- what's that? Who's that running after her?

(Looks through his field glasses.)

Mother -- how did mother come here? Has everyone in Russia come out on this battlefield? Dniester! Dniester! My motorbike, quick! My motorbike!

(He exits swiftly. Sound of motorcycle vanishing in the distance.)

Act I, Scene 7

(The German camp. Enter Goering and Von Bock, conversing.)

GOERING: Yet Moscow remains unconquered even now.

VON BOCK: My greatest doubt is precisely there.

GOERING: What doubt?

VON BOCK: German footprints are over all Russia. But even being caught, she is not caught. Besieged in Leningrad, gored at Moscow, one hopes Germany is not defeated at Stalingrad.

GOERING: That's exactly why we must have Stalingrad. And that, too, at any cost.

VON BOCK: We've paid dearly, Marshal. At the bend of the Don alone, the price we've paid would probably have paid the reparations for the greatest war in the world. This battle was even more cruel, stunning and desparate than the battle of Voronezh.

GOERING: That's true, of course.

VON BOCK: We've mobilized our greatest strength on the bend of the Don. From the other direction, Manstein finished the Crimean campaign and advanced from Rostov. In the meantime, Von Kleist arrived with the Seventeenth Army by the North Caucasus route, Von Weick's Tank Force arrived from Voronezh to assist Manstein. Apart from Italian and Hungarian troops, fresh troops from western Europe arrived by the first of August and joined me. Even all this could not sate the hunger of the Don. Wasn't this sufficient payment on our part?

GOERING: We ought to feel proud of that.

VON BOCK: Pride! I've made a gift of six-hundred-and-six thousand soldiers to cross a trifling river. My mind at least doesn't assent to this argument for pride.

GOERING: These aren't fitting words on the lips of an important and judicious fighter like you. One can hardly think of victory while calculating loss and destruction in combat. Prepare yourself! This time, a million soldiers, three thousand tanks and three thousand bombers will be mobilized for the battle for Stalingrad. Each regiment, each officer, each soldier storming and entering Stalingrad will be given a sixty day pass.

VON BOCK: We've made promises like this often before. We've made them at Kharkov, and at Moscow, and at Sebastopol. Yet at Sevastopol alone, three hundred thousand soldiers were killed or wounded. The only gain was that Colonel Manstein is now Field Marshal Manstein. And Field Marshal Von Bock --

GOERING: Are you jealous of this?

VON BOCK: I was merely stating facts. I'm past the age of being jealous at anyone's promotion.

GOERING: Very well then; please listen carefully to this -- the Führer's orders, we must have Stalingrad at any price. The overall command for the battle of Stalingrad is with General Von Paulus. And you will be responsible for information gathering -- not only from captured military personnel, but from all Russians, irrespective of their sex. Any brutality, inhumanity, any barbarity that you may have to use -- do not flinch from using it. For gaining each mile, each yard, even each inch of territory, fearful scars of this terrible attack by Nazi Germany must be branded on the political, economic and national life of Russia.

(Exit.)

VON BOCK: Well then, Von Paulus will be promoted to field marshal from general this time.

(Enter Ivan Maurice.)

MAURICE: Heil Hitler! Did you call me, Marshal?

VON BOCK: Yes, some information was required. What's the distance from the Don to the Volga?

MAURICE: Forty miles at some places, fifty at others.

VON BOCK: And between Kalach and Stalingrad?

MAURICE: Forty miles.

VON BOCK: Very well then. A million soldiers, three thousand tanks and three thousand bombers of ours must mobilize in a forty mile area.

MAURICE: Anything else, Marshal?

VON BOCK: Can you tell me anything about the area around Stalingrad?

MAURICE: They call this forty mile strip "the land of the bald earth." The roads aren't any too good, either. From the Don the land gradually slopes up towards the Volga, dropping down again on the margins of the river. Scattered ridges running east-west. And those nasty crevices that they call Balka. And the Volga is a mile and a half to two miles across in places, with different sized sand bars in it.

VON BOCK: Thank you.

MAURICE: But it's a fine town. Wide roads, large houses, big factories. In one word, Stalingrad is Russia's "Steeltown."

VON BOCK: And that "Steeltown" is our only target.

MAURICE: Quite right -- Marshal. It ought to be just so.

VON BOCK: The town will be besieged on the 15th of September under General Von Paulus's command. In the meantime, see that I'm supplied with the sketch of Stalingrad. And if necessary, Maurice, you'll have to go into combat, too.

(Exit Von Bock. As he realizes the meaning of the marshal's words, Maurice breaks down in tears.)

MAURICE: The town will be besieged on the 15th of September. And if necessary, Maurice, you too will have to go into combat --

(Sobs.)

(Enter Bucher.)

BUCHER: Well, well, well! Where's that wingless angel of yours, eh? The sores from her cut wings not dried yet, huh?

MAURICE: Angel?

BUCHER: Yes, a-n-g-e-l -- angel!

MAURICE: Oh, ho angel? It's coming, coming. Wait. Patience rewards with ripe fruit. But listen -- don't make a grab. Your habits are rather shocking. You see a skirt and you lose control.

BUCHER: St. Peter save you. No sign of the wench, and all these big empty words. I ain't a lout like you. I'd have you know, chum, that when I was barber in a ladies' salon in town, how many nymphs, even queens and empresses hovered on the buttons of my waistcoat! Heh, heh!

MAURICE: Hovered on your waistcoat? On the buttons of the waistcoat of a barber?

BUCHER: And what else! Listen, when I went snip snip -- snip snip with my scissors -- where would their heads be? Tell me, tell me that hey? Just on this button, right? Heh! Heh! My lad, did old Bucher ever lose his head and grab hold of madam? Or bring his face less than two inches from their heads? No one can accuse me of that, huh --

MAURICE: Oh, drop it -- grab them! The backs of women's heads make me want to puke, ach!

BUCHER: What do you mean, b-b-backs of their heads? Why, wasn't there a mirror in front and wouldn't their faces float in front of my eyes? Ohh, Maurice! But still, I never lost control. Ha! Bucher is not one of those who lose control and choke and quake when he sees a pretty face.

(His last sentence is delivered in a quavering voice, for he sees Lucy approaching.)

MAURICE: Hey, shut up! Shut up, will you! She won't sing if her mood's spoiled.

BUCHER: She sings, too -- eh?

MAURICE: What did I tell you? Not just sing, she knows how to dance, too.

(Enter Lucy.)

MAURICE: Maria, since you have come, let's have a song!

BUCHER: No, Maria, a dance first.

MAURICE: No, a song first.

BUCHER: No, a dance first.

MAURICE: Let's have a song!

BUCHER: Let's have a dance!

MAURICE: A song.

BUCHER: A dance.

MAURICE: Song!

BUCHER: Dance!

(As they are about to come to blows, Lucy separates them.)

BUCHER: And as her limbs sway with the rhythm of the dance, our hearts will sway with her. And the tune of the song will rise upwards and with it our souls twisting and spiralling. Oh! I'm becoming a poet, becoming Goethe, Schiller, Wagner, Beethoven. Lovely one! Here I kneel before you, let's first have a dance.

MAURICE: No, gorgeous! A song first.

LUCY: You will have neither.

MAURICE & BUCHER: Wha-at!

LUCY: That is -- I am taking off.

MAURICE & BUCHER: Eh?

LUCY: Yes. First settle your quarrel, then --

MAURICE: No, no, Maria. Now don't leave us sad on such a happy day.

LUCY: And what's so special about today?

BUCHER: Didn't you know?

LUCY: No, I don't think.

BUCHER: You remember what date it is today?

LUCY: Yes, of course, it's the 10th of September.

MAURICE: Oh, come on! Today's the 13th.

LUCY: And so -- ?

MAURICE: And so -- we attack Stalingrad on the 15th of September.

LUCY: (Startled.) Oh, really?

BUCHER: Yes, and that's why tomorrow we have a day off, and that's what makes us feel happy.

MAURICE: But why did you look startled, Maria?

LUCY: All of you will go away to Stalingrad?

MAURICE & BUCHER: Oh, yes.

LUCY: And you won't take me along?

MAURICE & BUCHER: Oh, yes! Of course.

LUCY: There's no trusting you. They say never make love to a military man.

BUCHER: Come on, don't take us to be soldiers.

MAURICE: Not that sort.

(Echoes Bucher.)

BUCHER: There's no matching us in making love.

MAURICE: No, no matching us.

BUCHER: Because we are born Germans.

MAURICE: Yes, Germans.

LUCY: Uh huh?

MAURICE & BUCHER: M-a-r-i-a!

(Lucy moves into a dance and sings.)

LUCY: (Sings.)

I'll never wear the garland of thorns
For love, no, nevermore.
The garland of love is fiery
It burns the heart, evermore.

O Stranger, dweller of a distant land,
O don't call me near, forevermore,
Don't rob my heart evermore, oh evermore,
It'll be hard for me to live my love
If you should leave me forevermore.

Don't ever ask me to forget you, my friend,
evermore, forevermore.
I can't play tricks with my soul, no, no, nevermore,
Oh darling, what use in lighting the lamp
Of memory, if it doesn't drive
the mind's darkness away, forevermore.

(Even before the last strains of Lucy's song are ended, Bucher and Maurice rush upon her. Lucy pushes each away with an arm and pouts.)

LUCY: Oh, go away -- you are barbarians.

BUCHER & MAURICE: Why? Why?

LUCY: I feel ashamed. I mean, I love you both but that doesn't mean both of you together --

BUCHER: Right.

MAURICE: Right.

BUCHER: Maurice, go take a walk to the camp and back.

MAURICE: Oh, yeah! Why don't you go get a shave at the barbershop?

BUCHER: Ah no, my precious, and you'll abscond in the meantime. I'm first.

(As Bucher tries to drag Lucy off, Maurice hits him on the jaw.)

MAURICE: Careful there, Maria stays with me first.

BUCHER: You dog! I'll finish you today.

(They fight. Lucy stops them.)

LUCY: You aren't just plain savages, but stupid, idiotic, fools. Go on and fight -- and one of you will get a split skull and the other a black eye. And both of you will end up in the hospital. And the MP that comes around to tie you up will be the one to carry me off. And you two will get worthless green bananas.

MAURICE & BUCHER: Right, right! Very clever.

LUCY: Now listen, I have a plan. But will you follow it?

MAURICE & BUCHER: Yes, yes, I swear by Mother Mary.

LUCY: Well then. Now can you see that -- yes, there, that eucalyptus tree -- the first one to race up to it, touch it and come back to me, gets me. The one who loses gets the next act -- okay?

MAURICE & BUCHER: Okay. Okay.

MAURICE: A hundred times.

BUCHER: A thousand times.

LUCY: Line up then.

(They both crouch down for the sprint.)

Ready? Five-four-three-two-one-go.

(Maurice and Bucher race offstage. Lucy brings out a portable wireless set from her pocket and starts sending a message in code. She is bent over trying to send the message and keep an eye out for the sprinters. Blunstein creeps up on her silently, and crushes her hand with the telegraph key with the heel of his boot. Lucy cries out in pain. Blunstein picks up the gadget and examines it -- serpentine villainy in his eyes.)

BLUNSTEIN: Is this yours? Answer me, whose is it? -- well, since you keep quiet, we'll assume it is yours, eh? A Russian transmitter! And the code you were using is unknown to us. Therefore, you are a Russian spy, beyond any doubt. You she-devil --

(He slowly moves towards her with arms outstretched to choke her. Lucy goes back step by step. In the meantime, re-enter Maurice and Bucher shouting, "I'm first" and both grab hold of Blunstein by mistake. Lucy tries to escape in the ensuing melee.)

BLUNSTEIN: Stop her!

(Whichever way she tries to escape, an armed guard charges at her. She falls to the ground. Blunstein shakes free of Bucher and Maurice.)

MAURICE: Something seems fishy.

BUCHER: Yes. I guess so. Hey, Blunstein, what's up?

BLUNSTEIN: You bunch of stupid fools! Playing little love games with a Russian spy.

BUCHER: Spy!

MAURICE: Russian!

BUCHER: Who says so?

MAURICE: It can't be true!

BUCHER: If she is a spy --

MAURICE: Then each of us is an --

BLUNSTEIN: Ass!

BUCHER & MAURICE: Absolutely.

BUCHER: Hey, what did you say?

MAURICE: A-s-s! Mind your tongue Blunstein! Maria has been with us a long time.

BLUNSTEIN: Yes, and just because she has been with us a long time we've lost thousands of young soldiers. Here, do you recognize this?

MAURICE: A telegraph key!

BUCHER: A wireless set!

BLUNSTEIN: And Russian made. If her clothes are searched many more secrets will be found.

BUCHER: I'll search!

MAURICE: No, quit it; I'll search!

BLUNSTEIN: Stop you two. Neither of you will be able to do it alone. Search her together.

(Lucy is jolted by fright.)

BLUNSTEIN: Search every bit of her, every nook and cranny. If needed don't hesitate to strip her of her flesh, let alone her clothes. See if she has anything hidden!

(Maurice and Bucher rush upon Lucy. Blunstein laughs diabolically. As Lucy falls down, a slip of paper falls out. Lucy quickly picks it up and swallows it. Blunstein grabs hold of her throat and chokes her.)

BLUNSTEIN: Bring it out, bring it out you --

(The paper is forced out.)

MAURICE: Echh -- it's all wet.

BUCHER: Hey -- this looks like a map.

BLUNSTEIN: And of our sector, too. Look here, this thin line that follows the bends of the Don and goes straight towards our magazines.

MAURICE: Damnation!

BLUNSTEIN: There's much, much more to be obtained from this girl.

(They move upon Lucy. But, enter Von Bock.)

VON BOCK: Halt!

ALL: Heil Hitler!

VON BOCK: Heil Hitler! However much you search after this you won't find a thing outside -- everything is inside.

BUCHER: I've looked inside her skirt, too, Marshal.

VON BOCK: No, not in there, you fool! It is inside her eyes, and inside her guts.

MAURICE: Shall I rip her eyes out, Marshal?

BUCHER: Shall I rip her belly open, Marshal?

VON BOCK: And Blunstein, you couldn't tear her mind up into shreds and search. Well now -- let's have a few answers, my dear young lady. How long have you been with us?

LUCY: Almost two years.

VON BOCK: Tell me, were you never afraid?

LUCY: You can't be a spy if you're afraid.

VON BOCK: Hmm! How many like you are there in our other sections?

LUCY: Thousands upon thousands.

VON BOCK: Why did you come here?

LUCY: Why have all of you come here? Wasn't there room for you to die in your own country?

VON BOCK: Yes, there was. But since we are the bearers of Aryan culture, we have voluntarily taken up the heavy burden of civilizing the non-Aryans and the responsibility of being masters over them.

LUCY: Is this the mark of your civilization? This, and this, and this?

(Points to the wounds all over her body.)

VON BOCK: That's trifling, compared to your crime.

LUCY: Crime? What crime? If what I've done to save my own land from foreign brutes is a crime, then I'll commit such crimes a thousand times over.

VON BOCK: Then your body will be stamped a thousand times with the brand of your shame.

LUCY: Shame! What else have you left of me, you animal!

VON BOCK: Come? It doesn't look like your body's lost anything.

LUCY: You animals, you beasts, you pack of hounds!

VON BOCK: Ha! Ha! Ha!

(Stops the three soldiers from going towards Lucy.)

Stop all of you! Blunstein, take her to the barracks and have some fun.

(Exits.)

BLUNSTEIN: Thank you, Marshal! Come my beautiful terror! Let's witness what other secrets may lie behind your curtain.

(Exit dragging Lucy. Bucher and Maurice are left on stage, silent and astonished and trying to get over their astonishment by taking turns with a bottle.)

BUCHER: Oh, hell! The battle was between lions and tigers, and that fox Blunstein walks off with the dead buck at the end!

MAURICE: Doe, you fool, not buck! You don't know your genders.

BUCHER: You shut up! Anger makes me burn from top to toe. Only because Marshal Von Bock ordered, otherwise --

MAURICE: Absolutely. We must have justice.

BUCHER: Let's shake on that, buddy! We must avenge this or we aren't Germans.

MAURICE: Aren't Germans. (He echoes.)

BUCHER: We aren't Germans.

MAURICE: We aren't Germans.

BUCHER: No, we aren't.

MAURICE: No, no.

BUCHER: No, there isn't.

MAURICE: There isn't?

BUCHER: Let's go!

MAURICE: Come on!

(They go out holding on to each other.)

Act I, Scene 8

(The Soviet camp. Enter Muniya and Petroslavsky talking.)

MUNIYA: Did you say signaller? So you son Dniester sends messages? Ha! My son Seravich is a general. He's the maker and master of an entire regiment.

PETROSLAVSKY: Enough, enough, that'll do, thank you! Soon my boy'll be general, too.

MUNIYA: The sun won't rise that day.

PETROSLAVSKY: We'll see! Let's just wait for this campaign to be over, upon my word he'll be a general in the next!

MUNIYA: And if this campaign finishes him off?

PETROSLAVSKY: Death take you, and your son!

MUNIYA: You think I'll weep if my son dies, eh? Never! My husband died in the 1920s war, I lost one son last year at Sevastopol, my daughter in Astrakhan died just a few days ago -- but have you seen me cry? And such fear for your one boy. Get lost, you disgusting coward.

PETROSLAVSKY: Careful, you hag! Don't you call me a coward, I tell you.

MUNIYA: And why not? Those brutes dragged a young girl off, in front of your very eyes, and you stood by and did nothing. Had it been your own flesh and blood, could you have done the same?

PETROSLAVSKY: Was there anything to be done, besides standing by without a word?

MUNIYA: Why, didn't you have any crackers? Couldn't you have thrown one in their faces?

PETROSLAVSKY: Of course I could have! But wouldn't Lucy have died, too?

MUNIYA: And so what! Far better to be dead than to live dishonored.

PETROSLAVSKY: Good -- agreed. Here I go, to finish her off. Damn, damn! Mess of *precipitate cucurbita*!

(Moves to leave.)

MUNIYA: Not only that girl. You've got to finish off a handful of Germans with her, too.

PETROSLAVSKY: Hey -- why don't you do something else instead?

MUNIYA: What?

PETROSLAVSKY: Why don't you come along with me, and if I can't finish Lucy, I'll leave you in the German camp.

MUNIYA: And what then?

PETROSLAVSKY: They'll forget about Lucy once they see your charms. And then I'll be able to scram with the girl.

MUNIYA: You think you're funny, don't you, you old cock!

PETROSLAVSKY: Old cock! Now just what exactly does that mean?

MUNIYA: It means your bloody head! Don't bother to come. I'll go myself.

(Exits.)

PETROSLAVSKY: Hey, wait, hey listen you old hag --

(Enter Dniester.)

DNIESTER: Who're you calling, father?

PETROSLAVSKY: It's that old witch. The hag is just impossible -- she took off to rescue Lucy!

DNIESTER: But General Seravich has gone disguised as a German to rescue her.'

PETROSLAVSKY: Who?

DNIESTER: General Seravich.

PETROSLAVSKY: But isn't that the ole woman's son?

DNIESTER: Ah, all's lost!

PETROSLAVSKY: What's the matter?

DNIESTER: Don't you see, father, rescuing Lucy means throwing a grenade on the German camp!

PETROSLAVSKY: Yes -- that's exactly what she said before she left.

DNIESTER: Then -- just think about it. If Seravich is in the camp, the son will die at his mother's hands. And I know that old woman -- she never misses.

PETROSLAVSKY: Do I have good reason to call her a witch! Her own child, and the children of others -- she'll devour them all.

DNIESTER: Father, I must go -- (Moves to go.)

PETROSLAVSKY: Hey wait, wait a moment -- listen --

DNIESTER: I will, if I return alive. And if I die (points toward sky) then radio a message in my name over there.

(Exit.)

PETROSLAVSKY: I don't understand a single thing these people say. Oh damn! Damn *precipitous cucurbita pepo*!

(Exits. Enter Stalin followed by Zhukov.)

STALIN: The day isn't far distant, Marshal, when the foe will experience the full weight of a blow by the Red Army. And then we'll have our game of fun.

ZHUKOV: A game?

STALIN: When you think, Marshal, that hordes of Russians, by the thousands, men and women, young and old, have come forward with a vow to defend the land -- does it not fill you with happiness? They fling themselves in front of the enemy cannons in the joy of death. Have you ever witnessed such an unimaginable game of life and death?

ZHUKOV: Comrade!

STALIN: While there is even a single Russian child alive, Russia will not bow down before the Nazi bayonets. "Victory or Death" -- let this be our sacred vow, on the lips of every Russian, man and woman -- and you will see, comrade, that even if all trace of Russia is lost from the face of the earth, she will be indelibly inscribed in the pages of history.

ZHUKOV: Not only have I not forgotten that, comrade, no one else has either. In this battle of Stalingrad, Lietenant General V. I. Chuikov, commander of the 62nd Division, Colonel General A. I. Yeremenko, Major General Ivan Ludnikov of the 13th Guards Division -- have all given proof that their courage is boundless and unforgettable.

STALIN: True, comrade, but of the ten thousand crack fighters of the Red Army in General Ludnikov's 70th Division, only eight hundred survived.

ZHUKOV: That is undoubtedly distressing. But that these ten thousand troops destroyed fifty thousand German soldiers, gives us hope.

(Suddenly the voices of thousands cheering "Hooray" is heard over the radio.)

ZHUKOV: What has happened?

STALIN: Is it then --

ZHUKOV: Sounds like the Red Army's cry of victory.

(Enter Nikolai singing.)

NIKOLAI: (Singing.)

The Red Army's red flag has turned the whole earth red
Von Paulus's red face is lost and so afraid
The waters of Volga are uncontrollable, and
    the Don hisses today
The army of the Nazi torturers Russian anger
    has made to faint,
The earth of Stalingrad shakes, and shakes the
    blue sky overhead.

(Salutes and comes to a halt.)

ZHUKOV: What news, Nikolai?

NIKOLAI: The army of Colonel General Rokossovsky proceeding along the Volga, has just pierced through Von Paulus's ring, and made contact with Golikov, the defender of Stalingrad, and Lieutenant General Chuikov -- at Latosanka.

STALIN: Thanks, infinite thanks to the Almighty.

NIKOLAI: They have taken Latosanka.

ZHUKOV: Hooray!

NIKOLAI: Moreover, Vatutin and Rokossovsky from the right, and Colonel General Yeremenko from the left, have surrounded Von Paulu with his twenty-two divisions.

STALIN: And then?

NIKOLAI: The Junker fifty-two planes that were supplying Von Paulus have been stopped with one blow from Major General Rodimstev.

ZHUKOV: And then --

NIKOLAI: And then attack after attack!

(Offstage sound of battle, heavy guns firing, etc.)

NIKOLAI: Listen to the voice of General Vatutin. The German troops are fleeing!

(Immediately -- the roar of cannons. Cries of Russian victory, mingled with terrified cries of the defeated Germans are heard, offstage.)

STALIN: Ha ha ha!

NIKOLAI: (Sings.)

Zindābād! Zindābād!
Great acts have been done on earth
By the Red Army and Stalingrad.
Where will that Hitler now
Hide his arrogant face
All his dreams of world conquest
Have shattered in disgrace
The snake's hood is bowed henceforth.
Destroyed is Nazibad!

(Exits.)

STALIN: I must go immediately, comrade. I must get all the reports and congratulate all the generals. I have to broadcast far and wide the historic news of the victory at Stalingrad. And send the ultimatum for surrender to the pride of Nazi Germany -- Marshal Von Paulus.

(Exits.)

ZHUKOV: (In consciously elevated verse style.)

Hitler! Wait awhile;
The business is near accomplished,
And we'll greet you all
In the iron dungeon of Moscow!

(He moves to exit. Enter Petroslavsky.)

PETROSLAVSKY: Alas, Marshal, all is lost!

ZHUKOV: What has happened?

PETROSLAVSKY: Lucy has been caught.

ZHUKOV: What!

PETROSLAVSKY: Hearing the news -- that old witch Muniya will surely throw a bomb on the German camp to kill Lucy so that the Germans can get no information out of her. But if General Seravich should have reached there by then, Lucy will die, the general will die, Muniya -- Dniester -- everyone will die from the blast of that witch's grenade.

ZHUKOV: Why didn't you stop Dniester?

PETROSLAVSKY: I did -- but that *precipitate cucurbita* wouldn't listen. Pointing at the sky he said, 'If I die, send me the news of our victory at Stalingrad by the wireless.' Let him go, let him go. Don't you think about that *precipitate cucurbita*, comrade.

ZHUKOV: I'm not thinking about Dniester, Petro. I'm thinking of you.

PETROSLAVSKY: Of me!

ZHUKOV: Yes. If Dniester dies, how will you survive?

PETROSLAVSKY: Just as that witch Muniya survives!

ZHUKOV: Whatever do you mean?

PETROSLAVSKY: General Seravich is that hag's son!

ZHUKOV: Who's told you this?

PETROSLAVSKY: My Dniester.

ZHUKOV: All is lost!

PETROSLAVSKY: Didn't I tell you so, already?

ZHUKOV: Well anyway -- I've a job for you.

PETROSLAVSKY: What?

ZHUKOV: Take this note and go to Major General Krilov right away.

PETROSLAVSKY: And then?

ZHUKOV: Tell him to set up six-barrelled mortars around General Von Bentham's camp.

PETROSLAVSKY: Why?

ZHUKOV: If the camp where they hold Lucy prisoner is blown off, neither mother nor son will suffer the wrenching sorrow of separation.

PETROSLAVSKY: Comrade!

ZHUKOV: And if you see that Muniya has done the job -- then fulfill Dniester's last wish!

PETROSLAVSKY: What do you mean?

ZHUKOV: Send a dispatch about the victory at Stalingrad to Dniester in the other world.

(Exits.)

PETROSLAVSKY: Damn it all -- I don't understand a thing, anyway -- how could I? Don't have anything you could call gray matter, really. Anyhow -- now the question is, six-barrelled mortars around Von Bentham's camp! Damn, damn, mess of *precipitate cucurbita pepo*! Why not order me to get inside one of the barrels instead? Would have ended all my woes. No, never anything so sane. The young boy will leave for yonder with a hurrah, and the old father will sit here and tap out messages -- dot dash dot dot dash dash dot dash dot.

(Exits.)

Act II, Scene 1

(Sound of a terrible battle is first heard on the dark stage. Flashes of gunfire and heavy ordnance. As the stage lights come up gradually, Hitler is seen pacing restlessly. Several papers in his hand. He skims through them every now and then.)

HITLER: Von Bock, Rundstedt, Von Leeb -- there is news from all of them. But what is Von Paulus doing? He ought to be near Stalingrad by now. And doesn't he know that even the reports should be sent to me keeping time to the hands of the clock -- those were my orders?

(Enter Rolf Keller, burns all over his body, tattered ramnants of charred uniform. Salutes.)

KELLER: Heil Hitler! I am Rolf Keller.

HITLER: Where do you come from? With what report?

KELLER: I come from Kotelnikovo -- from the division commanded by Field Marshal Von Paulus.

HITLER: Where's the report?

KELLER: Pardon me, mein Herr! There weren't enough pockets left on my uniform to carry the report.

HITLER: I don't want any excuses. If there wasn't room you could have cut your skin and carried the dispatch inside. Wasn't there a single soldier with pockets in your division? Nor a single wireless set?

KELLER: I beg pardon again, mein Herr. Even what little uniform I have left, others don't. And the wireless? Apart from rifles, we have thrown everything away. Some have only held onto their bayonets.

HITLER: Why? What happened?

KELLER: The two sides were face to face at Kotelnikovo. Suddenly a strong wind started in the west. Seizing the opportunity, we set fire to the dry grass. Within moments the fire spread all across the plain and pushed by the wind, streaked towards the Russians.

HITLER: Yes -- and then?

KELLER: The corpses of the dead from the week before which were spread all over the plain started burning.

HITLER: Well -- that's good.

KELLER: But the danger lay in another quarter. In the searing heat of the fire, all the canals and ponds dried up, even the small springs. Only one well survived. For three or four nights, a battle raged around that well for water. In the meantime the fire would not die out. We had to advance at a crawl through the flames. Most of the troops have taken off their uniforms and thrown them away, afraid of being burnt. Oh, if only your eyes had seen it, mein Herr!

HITLER: All war is a return to the savage state. And if it means a return to the savage state in matters of dress, it should be welcomed.

KELLER: There isn't a single one of us who hasn't been scorched by the fire. Huge blisters have appeared on most of the troops. The heat and the smoke have temporarily blinded many.

HITLER: Orders will be sent in due time to shoot them and to stop wasting rations.

KELLER: Mein Herr!

HITLER: Kotelnikovo -- Stalingrad is still another fifteen miles.

KELLER: But we won't advance any further.

HITLER: You won't! (Angrily.) At your whim?

KELLER: Asking these half-dead soldiers to advance is to push them into the jaws of certain death, mein Herr! Please arrange for fresh troops to be sent in.

HITLER: This too is perhaps part of your report?

KELLER: No, mein Herr! Field Marshal Von Paulus would execute me if he hears. This is only the request of our half-burned soldiers to their Führer.

HITLER: Then listen to their Führer's orders. Every charred, half-burned and decomposed soldier's remains will be taken from the field of Kotelnikovo, carried to Berlin and buried with full military honors, and on them will be raised the greatest memorial in the world's history.

KELLER: And for those that are still alive, alive in fear, terror, in madness --

HITLER: For them, my orders are to advance another fifteen miles like madmen, and pounce upon those who have caused their madness.

KELLER: Then they will indeed pounce upon you.

HITLER: (Explodes in anger.) K--e--l--l--e--r!

KELLER: Send in fresh soldiers, mein Herr! Give us time at least to recuperate. Give us a chance to get medical attention. We will join the battle again. Oh believe me, mein Herr, we are not traitors.

HITLER: You are not traitors? You stand up to your Führer's face and answer back and yet you say you are not traitors? Go back immediately to your unit. Go this instant!

KELLER: I will return as soon as you issue an order for us to rest. Not before.

HITLER: Get out, or I will --

KELLER: Then it seems I'll have to take the thumb-print from your dead body.

(Keller pulls a pistol from his clothes and fires upon Hitler repeatedly. Hitler falls down on his face with several injuries. Two armed guards rush in. Before they can shoot him, enter Goering, running, from the opposite direction.)

GOERING: Wait! Do not kill him. He will be tried under military law. And then sentenced. Take the Führer's body out.

(Goering snatches gun away from Keller. The body guards carry the corpse of Hitler out. In the meantime, enter Von Bock.)

VON BOCK: Heil Hitler!

(Keller laughs madly.)

KELLER: Whose name are you saluting, Marshal? By now he's --

(Goering slaps him on the face. Keller falls down a few feet away.)

GOERING: Halt! Bring the Führer's body here. He will be judged in front of his own action.

(The body guards bring the corpse back in and put it down prone, then wait for orders, pistols at the ready. Goering and Von Bock exchange looks.)

GOERING: Then please start, Marshal Von Bock. There's much work to be finished. Let's be done with his trial. You are undoubtedly familiar with the clauses involved?

KELLER: Trial! Clauses! Is this a farce? Why not finish it off with a shot right away? Why enact this play at all?

VON BOCK: There may be no need for you, but there is some for the law. Sit down!

(The guards make him sit down.)

And answer my questions. Your name?

KELLER: Rolf Keller.

VON BOCK: Regiment?

KELLER: With Marshal Von Paulus, Twenty-second Hamburg Battalion, Alpha Company.

VON BOCK: Why did you come here?

KELLER: To submit the report for the battle of Kotelnikovo.

VON BOCK: Into whose hands did you deliver the report.

KELLER: I have given it to the Führer himself, orally.

(Goering was about to search the pockets of the corpse, but stops on hearing this.)

GOERING: Let's see your movement order.

KELLER: I don't have it.

GOERING: And why not?

KELLER: I didn't bring any papers with me, there were no pockets left on my uniform.

GOERING: Then how did you bring this pistol? Answer me!

VON BOCK: Don't waste time. State whatever you have to in defense of yourself.

KELLER: Why -- why don't you kill me, my head is spinning, I can't sit up for long. The sooner I die, the sooner I'll reach them.

VON BOCK: Reach whom?

KELLER: Those who died bit by bit in the fire, fighting your battles -- their spirits. And I'll tell them, Rejoice! there's nothing to fear, brothers. I finished that *rākkhas* before I left. Now it's time to rejoice. Rejoice!

(Enter rapidly: the real Hitler. Goering and Von Bock and the guards salute. Keller is astonished, as he looks from the real Hitler to the corpse.)

HITLER: I am sorry your dream won't be fulfilled. What's his name again?

GOERING: Rolf Keller.

HITLER: Rolf Keller! I really am sorry. Surprised, aren't you? Not only you, most people don't know that there are a dozen pseudo-Hitlers, look-alikes doing my work for me. You killed one of them today. The real Führer is beyond the reach of a wretched worm like you.

(Hitler signs the judgement drawn up by Von Bock.)

But I am leaving orders to reunite you with your friends on the other side, quickly. Marshal Von Bock, take charge of delivering the accused to the firing squad. The two bodies must be buried within an hour.

VON BOCK: Yes, mein Herr!

(Von Bock salutes and points the way for Keller with his pistol. The guards carry the body of the false Hitler out. Exit.)

GOERING: But the news is really very ominous, mein Herr!

HITLER: Ominous! Let me hear how ominous.

GOERING: We have suffered total defeat at the battle of Stalingrad.

HITLER: D-e-f-e-a-t. (Hitler seems crushed.)

GOERING: Their Colonel Voronov sent a letter to Von Paulus demanding surrender.

HITLER: Demanding surrender!

GOERING: Von Paulus ignored that demand. Attack upon attack followed. Before the last shell had exploded, Marshal Von Paulus, racked by hunger and thirst, together with twenty-four members of the general staff and twenty-five hundred officers, was forced to surrender this morning.

HITLER: Forced to surrender! This morning? Today? The 2nd of February, 1943, will forever remain a blot in the pages of the military history of Germany, Goering.

GOERING: Mein Herr!

HITLER: And what do you ask me to do now, my friend?

GOERING: There is no other way but retreat now.

HITLER: Yes -- we must retreat. Retreat beyond the Dniester, the Dnieper, the Black Sea, across the Vistula to Germany. Withdraw again to a backroom in Berlin. Perhaps Hitler must now bury his dreams of building a Greater Germany and disappear into the unremembered darkness.

GOERING: That is not what I meant, my friend! I meant that though we must withdraw from Stalingrad, the footprint of Germany will not be removed from Russia. The swastika will still fly in Voronezh, Rostov, Kiev, Sebastopol.

HITLER: Impossible, Goering -- impossible. Russia will not quit after winning at Stalingrad. Now her counterattack will advance with the terrible speed of a flood tide.

GOERING: But why these unfounded fears? If we could still advance up to the Volga after Leningrad and Moscow, then we will advance again through the Caucasus, up the road to Baku.

HITLER: No, Goering, that will be impossible for you. Who will you advance with? I had deployed all my strength to conquer Stalingrad. Lacking troops, I had forcibly conscripted vigorous young workers from the farms and workshops.

GOERING: Mein Herr!

HITLER: As a result, farming's at a standstill. The factories have lost production. Millions of untrained clods entered the war and left Germany maimed.

GOERING: The fault isn't all theirs, mein Herr. Enemy maps are far more free of mistakes than our maps.

HITLER: Perhaps that. Yet even this is nothing but one of my mistakes.

GOERING: Remain assured, mein Herr -- though we may have lost at Stalingrad, we will surely win at Baku. And perhaps I'll be able to bring you that good news soon.

(Salutes and leaves.)

HITLER: Huh! What did Goering say before he left? We will surely win! And perhaps -- perhaps -- he will be able to bring me that news! Ah! Perhaps! Ha ha ha --

(Enter Eva.)

EVA: Mein Herr, mein Herr! What is it? Why are you laughing that way?

HITLER: For joy, Eva! For joy!

EVA: For joy! Then we are --

HITLER: Defeated in Stalingrad! I am overcome by the joy of defeat!

EVA: Oh, mein Herr! What are you saying?

HITLER: Radio Berlin is silent today. Hitler's fiery orations don't make waves on the earth's ether. Himmler's Gestapo troops have perhaps mutinied against him.

EVA: Mein Herr!

HITLER: Holland, Poland, Bulgaria, Rumania, Luxembourg, have perhaps raised their demanding banners together and are saying, "Hitler! Answer us! Give us food, clothing, drink and the assurance of life."

EVA: Mein Herr! Mein Herr! Please be quiet, mein Herr!

HITLER: Be quiet?

EVA: Certainly! For this defeat is not only yours, this is a defeat for all arms and armaments produced in Europe. The world will not mock you alone, but mock at once all the accursed bullets of Europe, all shells, tanks, mortars. The century's leading thinkers and scientists will stand reviled.

HITLER: Eva!

EVA: And if you think that this is a defeat, that too is your glory.

HITLER: What are you trying to tell me, Eva?

EVA: The glory you had won from the peddler's basket, the fame that was yours from the bricklayer's rod, the glory that you got from the haversack of a soldier on the field of Verdun, the glory you had earned from the dust of the road -- what if you should leave, scattering it in the dust?

HITLER: Ah! Are you trying to console me, Eva?

EVA: No, darling! This is not consolation. This is the desperate cry of the frustrated, denied heroine for the inaccessibly sophisticated hero.

HITLER: Then why is your face flushed with joy today?

EVA: Do you know why? Because I have found you so dearly mine today. That is why my eyes and face sparkle with Aurora's gleams, my voice hums with the melody of Minerva, my limbs swell with the tide of Venus.

HITLER: But the coursing waves of your youth may never make reckless abandonment rise in Hitler's veins again, Eva! Hitler is turning into embers now -- disappearing under the bottomless depths of defeat!

EVA: Mein Herr!

HITLER: Can't you hear the rushing waters of the North Sea, Eva! And the weeping enticement of the witches of the Black Forest! Listen, do you hear the hunting seagull exult at every bend of the Rhine! They all want to say but one thing --

EVA: Mein Herr!

HITLER: They say, "Hitler! You had raised your dwarf's hands and reached for the sun. This is your punishment."

EVA: Lies, all lies! What I had not understood amidst the celebration of your victory, I see plain at the moment of your defeat.

HITLER: Eva!

EVA: You had indeed embarked on the road to the Eternal. The ambition which makes the beggar want to be a householder, that which makes the householder want the wealth of a king, and the king want to be an emperor, and the emperor embark intoxicated upon conquest. It was ambition that drew you from Berlin to the battlefield of Stalingrad.

HITLER: Eva -- Eva --

EVA: And that is why this is not your crime, mein Herr, but the law of all life, the primordial desire of Adam and Eve.

HITLER: Your words make me feel that I will live again, Eva. Again hundreds of thousands of tanks will charge roaring at my command. Millions of soldiers will make the air resound with victorious cries -- "Heil Hitler!"

(Exits.)

EVA: Heil Hitler! Barbara -- Barbara --

(Enter her maid Barbara.)

BARBARA: Did you call, m'lady?

EVA: Yes, yes, I called! "Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have immortal longings in me."

BARBARA: Oh, miss!

EVA:
With that sky's distant blue
Draw the collyrium of my eyes
And bring the morning star
To set on my brow
And let my corset be made
Of woven scales
Of monsters of the deep.

BARBARA: Sweet miss!

EVA:
Hark! The inner depths have now emerged
Mein Herr is like Adam today.
And thus, blushing with Eve's love,
Eva is vested with a new form,
Ha! Ha! Ha!

(Exits.)

BARBARA: Ah, woe! Woe! The little *fraulein* has lost her mind.

(Enter Maurice.)

MAURICE: This is not surprising, because this is the way it is, always.

BARBARA: What's this! Why are you here?

MAURICE: That's not surprising either.

BARBARA: What do you mean?

MAURICE: Those who spend their life in espionage have to be present everywhere.

BARBARA: Did you give Blunstein my letter?

MAURICE: I tried, but he wouldn't take it.

BARBARA: What do you mean, wouldn't take it?

MAURICE: I mean he just didn't have the time on his hands to take it.

BARBARA: Oh, I see.

(Starts to go.)

MAURICE: Hey wait -- wait! Are you going off without finding out why he didn't have time, Barbara?

BARBARA: Come on then, tell me before I leave.

MAURICE: I will, but can you bear it?

BARBARA: Well, since you called me back to tell me, do I have an alternative?

MAURICE: Well -- I mean -- men become inhuman on the battlefield, you know -- don't you?

BARBARA: Not all; but yes, the greater part, do.

MAURICE: Blunstein, then, is with that greater part.

BARBARA: How's this?

MAURICE: He fell in love with a Russian girl.

BARBARA: Oh -- I see. Well, goodbye --

(Again she starts to leave.)

MAURICE: Wait a moment! I haven't told you the really important part yet.

BARBARA: There's more?

MAURICE: What do you mean! That's just the beginning.

BARBARA: If it's this way at the beginning, I can't imagine how terrible the end is!

MAURICE: It really is terrible. I don't know if you can bear it!

BARBARA: Speak up without fear. I'm listening.

MAURICE: That Russian girl was really a spy. When she was caught, a map of our camp was found on her.

BARBARA: And then?

MAURICE: Blunstein was given the duty to extract the rest from her. But Blunstein forgot about his country, his race. He became engrossed with that girl Lucy. But really -- she isn't even prettier than you.

BARBARA: Let's leave that business alone. Tell me what happened next.

MAURICE: This morning during our defeat at Stalingrad, Lucy shot Blunstein at an unguarded moment and slipped out of the camp.

BARBARA: (Cries out.) Blunstein's gone!

MAURICE: Wasn't it right for the traitor to die rather than live?

BARBARA: Shut up.

MAURICE: You didn't like that, eh?

BARBARA: Did you come here only to give me this news?

MAURICE: I know you'll get a terrible shock, Barbara, but yet tell me what am I to do? You see, I knew how much you loved that worthless fellow.

BARBARA: Maurice! Can you -- can you take me to Blunstein, just once! I know he'll never answer, never again. But -- but just once --

MAURICE: Of course! It's almost dark today, he won't be buried till dawn tomorrow. Straight to Camp Seventeen. You'll see Bucher sitting by the gate. He'll recognize you right away. And take you to the right place.

BARBARA: Endless thanks to you, Maurice. I must go now.

(Exits.)

MAURICE: Blunstein! Just a few more hours. The job will be done by then. Meantime the defeated German army is retreating! The Russians are hard on their trail. Everyone's out for his own life. In the midst of this uproar I'll avenge myself for having my morsel snatched from my lips, or my name isn't Ivan Maurice! Ha -- ha -- ha --

(Exits.)

Act II, Scene 2

(The German camp. Enter Lucy screaming, clothes in disarray. But she is stopped by the thrust of the raised bayonet of a German trooper who has advanced from the other side. Blunstein advances rapidly and catches hold of her. Next follows interrogation and torture to make her speak.)

BLUNSTEIN: Huh? I thought I'd loosen your tongue easily, but you are contrary! Well then, I'm forced to adopt unpleasant means, Lucy. Please don't blame me.

(Blunstein produces an instrument similar to a pair of pliers from his pocket. The sentry, catching his signal, forces Lucy down on a chair and ties back her arms.)

LUCY: What are you doing? Haven't you had your fill of torture?

BLUNSTEIN: Tut tut, my dear! Torture! When have you been tortured? All that's gone before has been to ask you with tender, loving care to reveal the names of at least five other spies like yourself, that's all! Those five would reveal another twenty-five.

LUCY: That hope of yours will never be fulfilled.

BLUENSTEIN: Then let me show you a small example of what's called real "Nazi torture," shall I?

(Blunstein goes behind Lucy and fondles her hands.)

Bravo! What lovely fingers! But the nails are so pale, don't you have any nail polish? Oh, I see -- where would you find time to paint you nails! But why didn't you tell me all this time? Wait, I'll make them all ripe and red, one by one.

(Blunstein seizes a nail with his pliers and applies pressure. Lucy shrieks in pain. Loud, sardonic laughter from Blunstein.)

Ooooh, does, it hurt? Does it hurt a lot? Tell me the names and I'll apply medicine, and you won't feel pain any more. Tell me, Lucy -- please! At least a few names -- two or three --

LUCY: No -- no -- no -- I won't!

BLUNSTEIN: Ach, the nail's crushed! Wait, I'll pull it out.

(As Blunstein uproots the nail, Lucy bites her lips to keep from crying, but fails.)

LUCY: Oh -- mother -- mother!

BLUNSTEIN: I'll pull out all your nails one by one. Let's see how long you last. I must have those names. Speak -- speak!

(Unable to bear it any longer, Lucy faints. Blunstein unties her hands and signals to the sentry, who goes out and comes back with some water. Lucy recovers consciousness when this is splattered on her. Blunstein signals the sentry to move away. He speaks to Lucy in a low voice.)

Forgive me, Lucy! I have to show cruelty because of my job. The real man in me is not so cruel. We are being watched from all sides, that's why -- listen carefully, announce openly that you will tell me everything in private! And once alone, we will escape together. Yes, I'll safely -- hush!

(Seeing the sentry returning on his rounds, Blunstein returns to his former roughness.)

Well, will you talk? At least one name -- or I shan't just pull out your nails, but your eyelids, one by one.

LUCY: Yes, I'll talk. I'll tell you their names and addresses, everything. But here we're before all passerby. If there is a Russian agent among them, he'll shoot me at once. Take me to a more private place!

BLUNSTEIN: Excellent, why didn't you say so before? (To the sentry.) You stand guard over here. See that no one enters that way.

(The soldier assents and strides up and down. Blunstein helps Lucy out. Suddenly Seravich pounces upon the sentry like a tiger, and kills him. Then, removing his cap and rifle, hides his own body with his own overcoat, and, taking his rifle, paces all around imitating the sentry, and cases the place as he does so. Suddenly Lucy enters running, crying with pain. Seravick swiftly pulls her away into hiding. Blunstein enters after her, running, cigarette in hand. He is surprised to find no one there. Bucher was, in the meantime, entering from the opposite direction. Observing Blunstein, he hesitates momentarily and keeps looking backward, repeatedly.)

Oh, Bucher! Did you see Lucy running this way? She shot out in this direction only a moment ago.

BUCHER: Heck, and I thought you two were playing a really turned-on game of hide-and-seek.

BLUNSTEIN: Then you did see her! Which way did she go?

BUCHER: There, those jeeps parked over there. She drove off in one of them that way.

(Bucher indicates the opposite direction.)

BLUNSTEIN: Took of in a jeep! Where will she go? I'll catch her right away. Lucy'll never be able to drive faster than me.

(Blunstein rushes out.)

BUCHER: (Shouts.) Now drive carefully, Blunstein. Don't wreck yourself in an accident!

(Lowering voice.) Saint Peter! Please make an accident happen, dear saint! I'll light a pair of candles in church after the war's over. That Maurice is an ass, after all the instructions. If we can't make off in the dark tonight, an opportunity might not come again.

(Enter Barbara dressed in black.)

BARBARA: This must be Camp Seventeen! And uh -- you must be Bucher?

BUCHER: Hey -- come in, come in! Been waiting all this time for you.

BARBARA: For me! Oh -- did Maurice tell you then?

BUCHER: Can't I understand without Maurice telling me, that you would come -- you would have to come?

BARBARA: Where has Blunstein been kept?

BUCHER: One moment -- I'll take you there in a moment. Flowers? Did you bring flowers?

BARBARA: Flowers! Meaning what?

BUCHER: I mean for his dead body. After all, you loved him at one time.

BARBARA: Not at one time, but even today -- I still love him.

BUCHER: What a pity! Yet that cad could not recognize you.

BARBARA: Please, will you kindly take me there?

BUCHER: Yes, yes, of course! Just waiting for that Maurice. He said he'd come too. Both of us had been very close with Blunstein, you see. Ah -- here he is, present as soon as he's named.

(Enter Maurice.)

MAURICE: Oh, Barbara, so you've arrived, I see! Then, Bucher, there's no reason for delay? Let's go and pray for our dear friend.

BUCHER: Yes, let's go! Come,Barbara!

(Barbara breaks down in sobs. Maurice and Bucher support her from two sides in a consolatory gesture and help her out. As soon as they leave, Lucy and Seravich emerge from hiding.)

LUCY: General! Those two devils falsely led Barbara away! They'll ruin her for sure.

SERAVICH: How do you know?

LUCY: They spoke of Blunstein's dead body, didn't you notice? But it was the very Blunstein that Bucher sent off in a jeep, supposedly after me. Amazing. I may, after all, be a girl of the enemy. But Barbara is German -- their countrywoman, of the same race!

SERAVICH: This is the inevitable poisonous fruit of war, Lucy. But this is not the time to ponder this problem. I've entered this enemy camp at great risk to take you back. I knew they would certainly get information out of you through inhuman torture.

LUCY: They have tortured me, General! Extreme torture -- heartless humiliation. But they could not get a word out of me. Not one.

SERAVICH: Don't delay -- come, let's escape.

LUCY: You leave, General! I have a small task unfinished. I'll go back as soon as I finish. There's no way for me to stay here anyway.

SERAVICH: What task?

LUCY: Blunstein -- I want to teach that fiend a little lesson. Do you know, taking me aside on the pretext of helping me --

SERAVICH: What! What did he do?

LUCY: He pressed a burning cigarette again and again on my skin, to get information out of me!

SERAVICH: Lucy!

LUCY: See here -- here -- and here! There are more that I can't show you.

SERAVICH: I'll stay, Lucy! I promise you I'll return with this dishonor, this outrage, avenged. But first you must get out of here. Later it will be hard to escape.

LUCY: You leave, General. It wasn't right for you to rush in like this to save the life of an insignificant girl spy. How very great is the responsibility on your shoulders.

SERAVICH: Lucy!

LUCY: There's nothing lost in the death of a hundred girls like us, General! Especially a trampled blossom with torn petals like me, that can never again be offered to anyone, much rather --

SERAVICH: I don't wish to hear a single word. You must return with me at once. All my life I'll wear this very torn and trampled blossom in my button-hole. Standing face to face with death, plight your troth, Lucy, that if we live till the end of the war, we'll marry. Speak, Lucy -- promise!

LUCY: Seravich!

SERAVICH: Lucy!

LUCY: Seravich! Those beasts have left nothing in me. With what can I return your love?

SERAVICH: Shame on you, Lucy! A human being is not a glass vessel, which cracks at the smallest rap.

LUCY: But purity, virtue --

SERAVICH: The day for understanding those words anew has arrived, Lucy. We will survive now, paying any price, this is our oath. After survival, when the time comes to enjoy life in peace, when there is time, then we'll wash away all the dirt and stain on our body or mind. Speak, is there no other uncertainty in your mind?

LUCY: Seravich! Can you lead me by the hand? I feel so weak.

SERAVICH: I'll carry you in my arms, Lucy. My betrothed, I'll --

(Tremendous noise of a grenade exploding inside the camp. The two are flung apart. When the smoke clears Seravich staggers up, then notices Lucy and rushes to her. Turning over her inert dead body, and seeing her bloodied face he is startled and screams.)
Lucy -- Lucy! Speak, Lucy -- speak! This is General Seravich speaking! This is a battlefield! Lucy, soldiers are punished for disobedience on the battlefield! Do not disobey an order, I order you -- I -- Answer me, answer me -- I request you, Lucy -- your Seravich is calling you, Lucy -- Lucy! Won't you answer? You are still cross! Will you still be naughty?

(Enter Muniya.)

MUNIYA: Well, finished! It's finished. My aim is still unfailing!

(She is startled to see Seravich.)

Who! Who -- S-e-r-a-v-i-c-h! You -- you here!

SERAVICH: Is it hard to recognize me, mother? But -- I am still alive. Yes ma, the enemy hasn't been able to touch a hair of my head, because of your blessing. Only they've snatched away Lucy -- snatched away your future daughter-in-law -- Oh --

(Cries.)

MUNIYA: Darling -- not they, I -- I, your mother, the witch -- I threw the grenade, and --

SERAVICH: No, mother! It wasn't you. You killed a girl spy merely, from whom, had she lived, they would have extracted many secrets. You made no mistake -- no mistake. But they! Those fiends had already killed my Lucy, extinguished the polestar of my life. Only a torn, gouged, dishonored, stained body was walking around -- only that has been stilled by the shrapnel from your grenade.

MUNIYA: Oh! What is this that I've done! If I knew even a word --

SERAVICH: Quiet, mother! Quiet! Don't cry! She'll wake up. Her slumber will be broken. The poor darling has not slept many nights for innumeralbe tortures. Those devils pulled out her nails with pincers, one by one, scarred her whole body with cigarette burns --

MUNIYA: Seravich! Come my son, let us escape! Perhaps even now --

SERAVICH: Hush! Don't wake her, mother! Don't you see her clothes torn beyond modesty. The poor darling would be embarrassed if she suddenly saw you like this. Let me arrange her properly.

(Seravich stands up with Lucy's body. Muniya stops him with a firm voice.)

MUNIYA: Seravich! This is not the time for you to break down in grief. Before you lies the duty to your country and your people! First you are a general, then you are a lover. Come with me. Cast her away! She is nothing but a lump of inanimate flesh now.

SERAVICH: Yes -- exactly. Lump of inanimate flesh. With no strength to move. That's just why I can't leave her behind, mother. She has no one to help her but me. No! Left with you all, her slumber will be broken. And if she wakes up she will never leave me. And I'll never be able to take revenge. Revenge -- revenge -- I must take revenge -- I must take revenge.

(Exit Seravich, carrying Lucy ignoring Muniya's obstruction. Enter Petroslavsky, who stops Muniya.)

PETROSLAVSKY: So there you are -- you old witch! What happened?

MUNIYA: Who is it? Petro! Look, look here! How the camp burns! I've blasted the whole thing with one grenade! All the Germans are busy escaping, no one comes to put out the flames.

PETROSLAVSKY: But where is General Seravich? He too came this way to save Lucy.

MUNIYA: That is the one regret -- that the general survived! Do you know, Petro -- the whole camp was shattered, but not a scratch on him!

PETROSLAVSKY: What's this drivel, you hag! I'm speaking of Seravich -- your son!

MUNIYA: No, no -- not my son. If it had been my son, a girl wouldn't have been more important than his own task. Go, Petro, I'll return only after I've finished that one, too.

PETROSLAVSKY: Do I call you a witch for nothing? You'll devour all of them, all of them. Let me be off to Major General Krilov. Unless you are put in a madhouse --

MUNIYA: Petro! Listen!

PETROSLAVSKY: No -- please don't cast your attention on me. I know that call. Be satisfied with devouring your sons.

MUNIYA: Petro!

PETROSLAVSKY: (Salutes.) Farewell, madame sorceress, farewell!

(Exits.)

MUNIYA: None of them really know me! No one wished to understand the words in my heart. Oh, God! Please take me now. Let me go and jump into the Volga's -- No, no, I can't die now! For Seravich is still alive. He is of no use to the country any more. Neither will ever anyone love his horrifying face. He'll burn constantly like a samovar with the fire of vengeance in his heart. It is better that he leaves, far better.

(Exit Muniya in one direction. Enter Blunstein running from the other direction.)

BLUNSTEIN: What's this? The camp is not here. Then Lucy --

(Enter Barbara, dishevelled.)

BARBARA: Here's Lucy!

BLUNSTEIN: What! Barbara, you here!

BARBARA: You couldn't hope for this, could you? Since you are mad for Lucy, and since Lucy is dead, I've become Lucy -- Have I done anything wrong?

BLUNSTEIN: What do you mean, Barbara? I can't understand a thing.

BARBARA: And how can you? Lucy has turned your head.

BLUNSTEIN: Barbara! Tell me the truth about what has happened! You are exceeding the limits of my patience.

BARBARA: Since you can snatch a morsel from people's mouths, then why shouldn't they snatch away yours?

BLUNSTEIN: Didn't you rob Bucher and Maurice of their rightful flesh? That's exactly why they --

BLUNSTEIN: Robbed me of the morsel rightfully mine, and flung ashes on my face. Ah! Bucher -- Maurice! You didn't know Blunstein then -- now I'll really acquaint you with him.

BARBARA: But couldn't you have met me at least once had you wished to, when I wrote to you?

BLUNSTEIN: Believe me, Barbara, there wasn't a single moment then.

BARBARA: A general can forget his country for his beloved. And you could not find a moment to even meet with yours. Yet this same lover of yours could one day cast over everything for you, and rush to the distant battlefield.

BLUNSTEIN: I am eternally grateful for that, Barbara. I am grateful to you.

BARBARA: Fine, fine! And that repays all debts! And do you know what I have had to give away for you? My honor, my beauty, my youth, my womanhood! Everything -- all. Here, look, look!

(Points to her body.)

BLUNSTEIN: Barbara, forgive me!

BARBARA: Forgiveness! Ha-ha-ha! Move, move away! You are traitors! You are ingrates! You are -- no -- nothing -- nothing at all.

BLUNSTEIN: Barbara!

BARBARA: I'm returning to Berlin. If you can, take revenge on Bucher and Maurice. Never forgive those that could violate a helpless woman, never.

(Exits.)

BLUNSTEIN: (Bringing out a pistol.)

Blunstein! Prepare now for the next act.

(Exits.)

Act II, Scene 3

(A Soviet camp -- somewhere in Central Europe. Enter Marshal Stalin and Marshal Zhukov.)

STALIN: There before us the Carpathian Mountains, their crescent range touches Rumania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and rises towards Poland.

ZHUKOV: And behind them, the mounting pressure of the pincer attack of our Red Army. Our infantry, bombers and artillery drive the German forces back again and again.

STALIN: Further -- we have to go ever further, comrade! At the Teheran Conference the American President Roosevelt and the British Prime Minister Churchill have decided to open a second front on the Normandy Coast. The Chinese leader, General Chiang Kai-Shek, has declared war against Germany's ally Japan in East Asia. On the other side, our concerted efforts are to attack crushingly the forces of Germany, enemy of mankind, from the east, west and south. Nazi Germany must be routed by a ceaseless attack from land, sea and air!

ZHUKOV: We, too, are ready for that, comrade!

STALIN: Readiness is not enough, comrade. We must advance -- advance beyond Yugoslavia, Italy and Austria. We have no rest until we reach the heart of Germany -- Berlin.

ZHUKOV: That is undoubtedly true, but in the present situation -- What do we gain from American or British assistance? I do not understand.

STALIN: However small the benefit for us, we do not need to concern ourselves with that now. But this much is undoubtedly true, that Roosevelt and Churchill have realized, that we can crush Hitlerian pride without their help. And that is exactly why, to preserve American and British imperialism from the contagion of communist culture after the destruction of Berlin, they have entered into this diplomatic game.

ZHUKOV: But we are not out to upset their political systems and establish communism. We advance to answer the arrogance of Hitler, the ally of Tojo and Mussolini. We advance to wrench Berlin from his grasp, and to compensate for our losses.

STALIN: Not only that, comrade! We advance as the messengers of liberty for the countries in Europe now in the Nazi grasp.

ZHUKOV: Perhaps realizing that, Finland has surrendered herself to us. In the Baltic states on the other side, the thirty German divisions in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have been wiped out by our armor, and so the Baltic, too, is in our hands.

STALIN: Why the Baltic alone? The defenses of Rumania, too, have crumbled. The young King Michael has joined hands with us and declared war on Hungary! Moreover, from the Balkans, Marshal Tito -- for whose head Hitler had declared a bounty of several thousand -- that heroic man has fought with our aid against a hundred and twenty-five thousand Axis troops with limitless bravery and freed the Balkans of the enemy.

ZHUKOV: Now it is time for you to declare a reward for the head of that tiger greedy for human blood. Issue a warrant for the death of that scourge of the world, the terror of this century, that tyrannical Satan of Nazi Germany! You will see millions of soldiers answer your call, all Berlin will crumble to dust at their united roar!

(Exits.)

STALIN: Oh, my friends! My Russian brothers! For all the courage, strength and patience you have displayed in past battles in freeing the motherland of the enemy, I will give you as a reward Berlin, the throbbing heart of your arch-foe Hitler!

Act II, Scene 4

(Shrill sound of sirens, and the sound of bombs immediately after Hitler enters like a madman. His left hand shakes horribly, and he walks dragging his left leg slightly. He appears to have aged a great deal.)

HITLER: Who! Who is it? Stormtroop leader Roehm! Get out!

(Sound of bombardment.)

You! The Austrain Chancellor Dollfuss. Why -- why have you come here?

(Sound of bombardment.)

Who is it? President Hindenburg of Germany! Out! Out! Or I'll silence your voices forever.

(He is about to aim his pistol, when Goering enters.)

GOERING: Heil Hitler!

HITLER: Who is it? Oh, Goering! Can you tell me why Roehm was here?

GOERING: Where Roehm? He was killed by your order long ago.

HITLER: K-i-l-l-e-d! K-i-l -- but Dollfuss?

GOERING: He too has been sent off by our conspiracy.

HITLER: Sent off! By our conspiracy! And Hindenburg?

GOERING: Had he lived, you'd never have established yourself in the newly-founded office of Führer.

(Points towards the markers on the map.)

HITLER: Well -- that's a relief. Come and look at the war situation. I'm predicting to you, Goering, this Red Army from the east, and the Anglo-American group from the west are advancing to join hands! You think that Berlin will be split in two. But only for a few minutes, for a few hours at most. Immediately thereafter you'll see a quarrel start between the two. Yes, this is a repetition of history. And I have positioned General Wenck here to take full advantage of this.

GOERING: I have done something without your permission. I beg forgiveness for it beforehand, mein Herr!

HITLER: There is no need for asking pardon. For if the fault is punishable, I do not forgive. Let me hear.

GOERING: The medication given you by Dr. Morell to be used at will -- I had secretly sent it to be tested. For your own safety, of course.

HITLER: What did your tests find?

GOERING: They are admittedly conducive to temporary stimulation, especially Dr. Koester's "antigas pill," but their indiscriminate use affects health --

HITLER: -- adversely! Several doctors before you were trying to convince me of that. I have sent them back in shame. You are merely echoing hearsay -- and so you are saved from humiliation. But hear this well, Morell has more talent in his little finger than there is in the brains of all your grand doctors put together.

GOERING: But perhaps you do not notice, even ten years ago, you seemed ten years younger than your age.

HITLER: And now -- I seem ten years older than my age, eh? But why blame it on Morell's drugs? Why not impute it to your collective treachery?

GOERING: Our treachery!

HITLER: Yes, your treachery. Some have done it and been caught. Others have done it and escaped being caught. And still others have not yet betrayed -- but will inevitably do so one day. Everyone -- everyone is treacherous. The entire German race is treacherous. Let the time come, all men and women, regardless of whether they are young or old, will be herded, driven by bullets and bayonets from north, south east and west, and gathered in the central zone of Germany. They won't be given a drop of water or a crust of bread on the entire journey. It is better for them to die.

(A bomb strikes directly overhead. The bunker fills with dust.)

GOERING: A bomb's hit directly over us. Dust has entered the ventillation shafts. Come, let's take shelter in the next bunker.

(They exit. Enter Bucher and Maurice.)

MAURICE: What's the matter? First the dust comes in -- at least we had some air then. Suddenly, now even that is stopped.

BUCHER: They have stopped the ventillators. As soon as a bomb hits above, they stop the fans or the whole bunker would get filled with dust.

MAURICE: And if a couple of bombs strike directly overhead? Then we'll die right inside the mousetrap.

BUCHER: Rubbish! Do you know how thick our roof is? Fifty feet -- straight cast concrete. Even ten of those bombs together wouldn't even graze it.

MAURICE: Hey, look here! Must be the Führer's lost the buttons of his uniform. I'd best keep them carefully, if they're lost --

BUCHER: Stop! Don't touch a thing! Those aren't buttons, you idiot! Those are armies of soldiers.

MAURICE: Soldiers!

BUCHER: What else? Entire regiments. Look, these red buttons are Russian troops -- coming into Berlin from the east. These white ones are the Americans advancing from the west. And these blue buttons preventing them from uniting are the regiments of our Marshal Wenck.

MAURICE: Very well then; let me take away these, at least.

BUCHER: Hey, you fool! What are you doing?

MAURICE: Well, wasn't it me that brought the news that Wenck has no regiment left at all? It's exhausted --

BUCHER: Shh -- quiet! If it reaches the Führer's ears he'll order a bullet of hot lead through your skull. Let mein Herr play mein Herr's game. As for us, let's try to find a way out. If we slink off even now we might find a route. Tell me -- what time is it?

MAURICE: My watch has been stopped the last four or five days.

BUCHER: Staying inside the bunker night and day I've lost all track of the date. What day of April is it? 23rd or 24th?

MAURICE: The Führer's birthday was the 20th. How many days since then?

BUCHER: I've forgotten. Anyway, if we manage to get outside we'll find out. Come on, let's try and scram.

(Exits. Enter Goering and Hitler, and a moment later Von Bock.)

HITLER: No, you will accept no letters of resignation. If they have to resign they will themselves have to come to me to resign.

VON BOCK: Then please accept my resignation as the first one.

HILTER: Your reason!

VON BOCK: Thousands of other officers can follow my path and desist from this war.

HILTLER: That is to say all of you conspiring together against me, want to remove me and usurp the post of Führer? But could I know the name of the person fit for this command?

VON BOCK: We did not even dream of that impossibility! We are soldiers; we can conduct a war. Being the leader of the nation is a castle in the air that never even hovered in our minds for a moment.

GOERING: Then why have you abandoned the battlefield and come to headquarters to submit your resignation?

VON BOCK: To save Germany from destruction.

GOERING: What gives you the idea that stopping the war will mean saving Germany from the clutches of destruction?

VON BOCK: There is no other way now.

HITLER: If there is no way then why don't you want to fight?

VON BOCK: Because my heart refuses.

HITLER: Yet you once rushed from Berlin to distant Stalingrad like a crazed moth, to give battle! Perhaps the heart was willing then in the hope of higher honors!

VON BOCK: No! I went then in the joy of adventure, dreaming the dream of a Greater Germany.

GOERING: But the day when you saw that dream vanish, afraid of knocking your head against the touchstone of Reality, you want to step aside alive.

VON BOCK: Pardon me, mein Herr! That idea is totally wrong. There you are totally mistaken. A man who held his life so dear could never rise from a mere soldier to being a Field Marshal! Without a truce now, every trace of Berlin will be swept away by the gory flood of this universal holocaust.

HITLER: Let that happen, but still no truce will be made. If a truce becomes inevitable, it'll be with the Anglo-American Allied forces, with the West. But still -- proud Hilter -- Hitler the arrogant, -- Hitler the Aryan, will never salute the bloody flag of the non-Aryan Stalin.

VON BOCK: Perhaps the Aryan-born Hitler can't yet see the writing on the wall.

GOERING: You are insulting the Great Führer.

VON BOCK: If a reminder of death is an insult then --

HITLER: Marshal, Hitler does not fear dying, but he does not know how to bow down before the enemy.

VON BOCK: May you die!

HITLER: What -- I die! Indeed.

VON BOCK: Yes, die, -- that will be a blessing for Germany. But we won't let Germany immolate herself with you.

HITLER: My death will be a blessing for Germany! But wasn't it I that once revived a derelict abandoned Germany, breaking the grip of the Treaty of Versailles? And lighting the lamp of patriotism in the heart of the land, made Germany known in the assembly of nations?

VON BOCK: And for that indeed ought you to be worshipped by the German nation. For possessing that strength alone, are you the supreme Führer of the Germans. But even the supreme leader can err, for which mistake the German nation is in its last gasps.

HITLER: If there has been a mistake, then let that come true. I'll leave Germany wallowing in the pit from where I had raised the country up, to a Paradise of Wealth, Education and Culture. But still I cannot make a truce.

VON BOCK: If you can't, then who had asked you to rush to devour someone else's country?

HITLER: Do you want to hear who asked me? The pro-Fascist policy of appeasement of the capitalist class of Britain, France, America. Today the whole world calls me "megalomaniac," calls me "criminal." But when the same France, Britain and America, panicking at the progress of Russian Communism, took advantage of the civil war in China and spent millions on Japan's aggression against Manchuria and China, and on Mussolini's aggression against Abyssinia, why then the League of Nation's did not move a single finger.

VON BOCK: Yet today those very same have taken up arms against Germany in the guise of Allies.

HITLER: This is but natural! Or Russia herself would attack America and Britain. Not only that, but Russia would never have been safe from devastating war, for even had I not attacked her, America or Britain surely would have.

GOERING: Moreover, the critical situation reached in international relations in 1940-41 could not have been resolved but by causing a world war.

HITLER: Not only that, the very allied forced that egged us on from behind for so long, -- how little is the censure that they have received from world opinion for all their incitement! How much has the world opposed them? Had I not gathered strength myself, they would have indeed consumed Germany.

GOERING: (To Von Bock): Do you have anything further to say?

HITLER: Now go! Many a soldier in Russia's pay is hiding in a German uniform now. Therefore, whoever orders our soldiers to retreat -- you will order him arrested or shot.

VON BOCK: It's no use giving me all these arguments. Moreover, my mental state is hardly inclined that way, because I am ill.

GOERING: That is to say that indirectly you want to mutiny?

VON BOCK: That is as you wish to imagine.

HITLER: I don't want debate, Marshal! I want obedience. Go, and defend the few bricks of Wilhelmstrasse, sacrificing the entire population of Germany, if necessary. Even that will bring me peace! And that is my final decision.

VON BOCK: And if you do not change this decision then the united strength of the Germans who still remain alive today will force your removal from Germany.

(Salutes and goes out.)

GOERING: How dare he!

HITLER: Goering! Go and silence Marshal Von Bock forever.

(Goering draws his pistol, spins it in the air and catches it, salutes and exits. A shot and a cry heard off-stage.

HITLER: Satan! These are your footsteps -- lead me where you will! . . .

(Enter Eva.)

EVA: Mein Herr!

HILTER: Eva! Tell me, have I really made a mistake?

EVA: Who has said this to you?

HITLER: Every man and woman in Germany today, every German soldier accuses -- I am solely responsible for the downfall of Germay!

EVA: But the same ones, once rent the skies with shouts of "Hitler *Zindābād*!" Obeying your command as the command of God, these same once sacrificed their lives on the battlefield.

HITLER: Ah! That is the cruel irony of history!

EVA: They did not call you an imperialist, greedy for conquest then, nor the destroyer of the nation. They couldn't bring themselves to say that attacking another's country is wrong. Where was their humanity? The nectar they received filling both hands, and of the poison they won't accept a drop?

HITLER: Eva!

EVA: They have forgotten the day when the Great Kaiser Wilhelm was shackled and led down the highway like a common prisoner! They have forgotten the time when the German race was persecuted — trod underfoot -- neglected, slighted, ignored at home and abroad by the Jewish plutocrats! They have forgotten the day when at the behest of the Allies Germany suffered from inferiority in trade, armaments, literature, and science.

HITLER: Eva!

EVA: Who gave them their freedom then, who, the right to follow their own route? Who on that day, played the melody of youth on the chords in the heart of infant Germany. No -- you must not listen to a single word. As you stepped out to the world at large with your head held high, so vanish from this earth, your head held high. But yet, never forgive this ingratitude of your country.

HITLER: No -- no pardon! No forgiveness under any circumstanes! But whenever I think that to build this Germany I've exhausted mind, body, intelligence, conscience atom by atom; whenever I think that the thought of presenting this Germany before the assembled nations of the world has kept me from going to my natural rest for a single night; whenever I think that I have never spent even a pfennig on myself thinking that it would have been squandering the wealth of Germany, then indeed my heart shatters.

EVA: Mein Herr!

HITLER: I am the child of a poor, common father. Thus luxury was my enemy! For the same reason the romantic days of my youth were spent on the battlefield! And at the threshhold of old age I have been unfair to you!

EVA: What is this, mein Herr! Tears in your eyes? Aren't you Hitler, the terror of the century! Aren't you Hitler, the dread of the world!

HITLER: But yet I am a man -- a fact that stayed outside my thoughts all my life. Today it has become real and manifested itself before me. "Life and Death, Love and Denial, Discipline and Madness" have all fused together today.

EVA: Mein Herr!

HITLER: (Sighing): Eva! Prepare for our marriage, the hour is at hand.

EVA: Oh no no! We have no need for this marriage. Let the joy of union remain distant today. Only use all your strength to save Berlin today. We will marry only if there is a victory, otherwise, never.

(Exits.)

HITLER: No, -- we will wed. We'll exchange our hearts in the midst of celebrating defeat. With the frequent roar of cannons, in the burning wave of mortars and bombers, in a "holi" of blood will our wedding end. The dying wails of a million soldiers will salute our nuptials. With the consummation of the bridal night the historic battle-cry of friend and foe will be stilled all over the earth. Ha ha ha

(Exits.)

ACT II Scene 5

(The streets of Berlin. Frequent roar of cannons and the rumble of tanks. Enter Marshal Zhukov with rapid strides.)

ZHUKOV: Forward -- forward you bands of Russia's youth! Berlin must come within your grasp. The Berlin that had once wanted to fly its swastika banner in the heart of Russia, — we must fly the blood-red flag of Russia in the heart of that very Berlin.

(Enter Petroslavsky.)

PETROSLAVSKY: Comrade!

ZHUKOV: What news Petro! Where are you coming from?

PETROSLAVSKY: From Frankfurt.

ZHUKOV: What news on that side?

PETROSLAVSKY: Marshal Koniev has come directly from Frankfurt and entered through the eastern gate of Berlin. On the other side Marshal Rokossovsky, after occupying the airport, has scattered his forces irregularly along the western perimeter of Berlin.

ZHUKOV: Now I go with my two arms extended to unite with Koniev and Rokossovsky. Could you do something? Send Dniester over to me.

PETROSLAVSKY: Dniester is no more!

ZHUKOV: Where is he?

PETROSLAVSKY: On the other side.

ZHUKOV: What?

PETROSLAVSKY: He got hold of an operational map from the German camp at Stettin harbor, and got captured while making off with it. He was totally disarmed and was being transported by air, when finding no other means, Dniester escaped from the guards, and breaking the glass on one of the windows dived into the violent, billowy, foaming North Sea, thousands of feet below. Who knows where the tiny form of my Dniester disappeared, midst that limitless, turbulent mass of blue water.

ZHUKOV: Don't grieve, Petro, you have lost one Dniester, but look, a thousand Dniesters, their pained voices saying, "Father I'm alive -- Father I'm alive." Dry your eyes and wish that his soul finds peace. And curse that human tiger Hitler, who has no children of his own, keeps himself in the safety of the bunker and is about to drive the whole country to extinction through the war, let him be destroyed.

PETROSLAVSKY: No, no, why should I weep! Shed tears for that precipitate *cucurbita*, indeed! Here look, look at me, are there tears in my eye? Am I weeping? Ha -- ha-ha!

(Exits.)

ZHUKOV: On -- on with the cannons! Flood the palaces of Berlin with a wave of fire! Turn the Germany of Hitler's dreams into a heap of rubble. Forward friends! Forward my boys. Berlin is yours, -- Berlin must be occupied.

(Exits. Enter Blunstein carrying a pistol.)

BLUNSTEIN: Where are those two devils? Where are Maurice and Bucher! Won't abscond cheating me. Couldn't find them hiding in the bunker all these days. But I noticed the attempt to escape last night. There's no salvation for you now. I will have full revenge with interest for your cruelty to Barbara! Or else I'm not "Blunstein, the gunner."

(Exits. Enter Barbara.)

BARBARA: Not here either! Then where, which way did he go! There, there he goes! Blunstein! Don't go, come back Blunstein —

(Enter Seravich, with a horrible expression on his face.)

SERAVICH: At last! At last I've found a woman for revenge.

BARBARA: (Alarmed) Oh! Your Lucy --

SERAVICH: Was taken by the Germans and tortured. Her red lips were bloodied with kiss after kiss. Her two beautiful eyes they blinded with their fingers. They crushed her and trampled on her, and flung her limbs as soft as cream, in a heap, inside their camp. I went to save her when a bomb went off blowing the whole camp away. When I came out through the coiling smoke carrying her half-scorched body, I saw -- Lucy was gone. I pressed her burnt, dissolving, horrifying face to my breast and called out, "Lucy --!" It seemed as if I heard her say from some endless void, "Avenge me -- avenge me!"

(Approaches her.)

BARBARA: No, no don't come -- don't come any further. (Retreats.) Is there anybody here, help me, save me!

SERAVICH: Lucy too must have cried out like this. She too must have asked for help this way! But no one came forward to help her! I must have revenge for that.

(Advance here.)

BARBARA: Is there anyone here, help me -- help me!

SERAVICH: (Catches her) A kiss for a kiss!

BARBARA: (Breaking away) You devil!

SERAVICH: An eye for an eye! (Strikes her.)

BARBARA: Oh -- !

SERAVICH: A rape for a rape! Ha-ha-ha!

(From the distance Muniya takes aim at Seravich and fires.)

SERAVICH: A-a-h! Is that you, mother! Mother, I've taken revenge! Ohh --

(Exits.)

MUNIYA: (Her pistol dropping to the ground.) Seravich -- Seravich!

BARBARA: (Moaning in pain.) Ohh --

MUNIYA: Get up -- little mother! (Lifts her up.)

BARBARA: Has that animal gone away?

MUNIYA: Yes -- it is gone!

BARBARA: If it comes back again?

MUNIYA: No -- it will never return!

BARBARA: No -- it will come again! And torture me again! No, no -- I'll run away, run away-y! I'll never be caught again. No, I'll never be caught again.

(Exits.)

MUNIYA: Good riddance to all of them! At last -- peace. I've lost father, husband, lost Kārumā, lost Petrov, and now I've lost Seravich. Yet -- I'm alive. And they said I wouldn't be able to bear it. I've killed two hundred Germans single-handed. I've shot one of my own sons with my own hands. Come -- come on -- fight, fire your guns! Dynamite! Charge with your bayonets! Ha-ha-ha!

(Exits. A skirmish. Afterwards: enters Bucher carrying his gun.)

BUCHER: Finished! No more ammunition! Waves of fire all around! Exulting Death, all around! Where do I turn! Which way do I turn!

(Enter Maurice.)

MAURICE: We must go through that tide of fire, piercing that wall of Death.

BUCHER: But where?

MAURICE: To Potsdam!

BUCHER: Potsdam is a pile of ashes under Rokossovsky's cannons.

MAURICE: Then Küstrin.

BUCHER: Koniev's army is making a bonfire out of Küstrin.

MAURICE: Then come, let's jump into the waters of the Rhine or the Oder! I can't bear these burning flames anymore.

BUCHER: No way to do that either.

MAURICE: Why not?

BUCHER: There's a dragnet of Russian tanks on the highways. You will be crushed to pulp any moment. And our own troops will shoot us down if they see us running away.

MAURICE: I will still make the attempt. Tongues of fire have burnt my uniform, blistered my skin.

BUCHER: Let's rather go and wait behind that house for now.

MAURICE: That too is going to collapse in a moment.

BUCHER: Then there is no other way but to accept death.

MAURICE: For five days my belly has not had a single crust of bread — I've survived only on water. Even a drop of that is impossible now.

BUCHER: Drink blood instead of water! Fresh blood! You'll survive a while longer. I've been living on blood these last ten days.

MAURICE: Yes -- I'll drink blood! I'll drink blood now! But not a soldier's blood — but the blood of a German Führer, -- the pure Aryan blood of Hitler!

(Exits.)

BUCHER: Maurice -- Maurice! Look out -- armored cars -- armored -- Maurice!

(The dying wail of Maurice in the distance. Enter Blunstein.)

BLUNSTEIN: No more Maurice! Crushed under the wheels of the armored cars.

BUCHER: You? --

BLUNSTEIN: Gunner Blunstein! Looks like you don't recognize me? You devil! You stain Germany --

BUCHER: Watch what you say, you bastard.

BLUNSTEIN: How dare you --

BUCHER: Let me pass! Did you hear -- let me pass!

BLUNSTEIN: Let you pass? You misled Barbara with tricks. Maurice has repented for it under the wheels of Russian armor. But you -- I won't allow you to die like that! You will die by my sub-machine gun. Prepare yourself!

(Raises his gun.)

BUCHER: Tank -- Ta-a-nk!

(As Blunstein looks behind him momentarily, Bucher runs away, but Blunstein turns back and shoots. Bucher dies.)

BLUNSTEIN: Barbara! I've finished Bucher — I've finished Bucher! Ha-ha-ha!

(Exits.)

Epilogue

(Enter Hitler, laughing like a madman. Goering following him in.)

HITLER: Ha! Ha! Ha!

GOERING: Bavaria, the Southern bastion of Germany, is under attack.

HITLER: Hah! ha! ha!

GOERING: General Dittmar and Von Papen are prisoners. Moreover, Eichmann is missing.

HITLER: Ha! Ha! Ha!

GOERING: Mussolini and his commanding general, Graziani, have been captured.

HITLER: Ha! Ha! Mussolini captured!

GOERING: Not only that -- he has been barbarously executed. First, a garland of shoes. Then stab after stab with bayonets. Then ten soldiers opened fire on him. His dead body was dragged off tied to an armored car.

HITLER: A-r-m-o-r-e-d car! Dead body!

GOERING: Oh my, friend.

HITLER: The destiny of the Italian nation was in his hands. He was one of the most important men in contemporary history. Italy gave birth to no man like him since the destruction of the ancient Roman Empire. In times to come Italy will have to hang her head in shame, thinking of his downfall -- Really Goering, now I'm totally bereft.

GOERING: But there is no time to wait now. You have to leave this place, immediately.

HITLER: Where will I go?

GOERING: To Munich.

HITLER: It is already in Zhukov's hand.

GOERING: Then to Vienna.

HITLER: The Anglo-American forces have established control over there.

GOERING: Then you are forced to surrender.

HITLER: No, I cannot surrender myself, Goering. I can die, but the shame of surrender is beyond bearing.

GOERING: But Himmler has already announced officially Germany's proposal for unconditional surrender.

HITLER: Himmler! Unconditional -- surrender -- Germany that has occupied so vast a share of European history, that has been second to none in Knowlege, Art, Literature, History, -- that Germany is to surrender unconditionally. Ah! How this pains me -- for this there are no words Goering! But, but, why was it thus? For whose mistakes did this heartbreaking defeat take place -- that's what I can't understand.

GOERING: But there's no time left. The enemy troops have learned the exact location of this bunker. If you order, I can send your double to Zhukov's camp for surrender.

HITLER: And what is the name of this noble soul that will go forth risking his own life to save mine, Goering?

GOERING: Augustus Wilhelm Brukholdi.

HITLER: Give him my regards. No one has to be sent today to save my life, Goering. I myself can save it. Hand in your resignation this instant, and go where you wish.

GOERING: Oh, my friend!

HITLER: I don't know why, but the world looks so very fair to me today. All Europe now appears reflected in my Eva. It is as if she put a cup of nectar in my hands and said, "Come, the hour is passing."

(Cannons.)

GOERING: Then, I will leave my friend!

HITLER: Yes, farewell.

GOERING: Good-bye!

HITLER: Good-bye, -- good bye forever.

(They shake hands. Goering departs.)

HITLER: (In verse)

Who are you, oh Dame of Fortune!
Whom I had wished to keep
Under my fist, in a captive's garb
It is you, who now mocks.
At my defeated, broken plans.
Laugh! Mock! Naught's lost
Spit on me, I wish no end to derision.
But promise only
You will show no mercy,
No pity no mitigating favour.

(Enter Eva.)

EVA: Mein Herr!

HITLER: Can you hear the cannons roar Eva! Can you hear the last agonized cry of Germany?

EVA: Yes, I hear.

HITLER: Can you feel by the shuddering of the bunker, that the earth is quaking outside, as palace after palace collapses in Germany.

EVA: Yes -- I can sense it.

HITLER: I had promised you that our marriage would be on a day like this, on a day like this the nuptials of Hitler, the terror of the world!

EVA: And I am ready!

(Gives her two pistols and capsules.)

HITLER: Take these. My first and last gift as a husband -- gun and poisoned capsule. Give me the same gift.

(Eva reciprocates.)

HITLER: The next task is merely to follow me. Fire at the temple as your teeth bite into the poison. Eva! Speak, Eva! Your hand will not shake?

EVA: You can trust me.

HITLER: All my life I have not lost faith in only two people, Eva. The first is you, and then my Alsatian shepherd, Blondi. The rest betray my salt. And that's why I suspect --

EVA: What do you suspect, mein Herr?

HITLER: So that the devils can't play football with our bodies, I've ordered gasoline to be brought. I have told Linge and Goebbels to lay us side by side and cremate us.

EVA: Mein Herr!

HITLER: For so long -- so very long, we have been shut up in this underground bunker. Now -- freedom will be ours. Our charred bodies will rise high with the coiling smoke out of the chimney of the bunker -- to the open sky. The earth will perhaps sigh in relief. Ready, Eva!

EVA: I'm ready!

(As the bullet hits the temple, Hitler collapses. Eva runs to him -- and says in a voice full of pain.)

EVA: Mein Herr! Shoot! Shoot! Mein Herr, mein Herr!

(Eva bites the poison capsule and dies.)

END

L. S. Rajagopalan and V. Subramanya Iyer

AIDS TO THE APPRECIATION OF KATHAKALI

Kathakali is now deservedly drawing a wider audience in India as well as in the western world owing in no small measure to the recently successful tours of notable companies, such as the Kerala Kalamandalam Kathakali Troupe. While the make-up, costumes and dance, and even the music easily appeal to enthusiastic spectators, the language of the songs -- Malayalam -- still stands as a barrier to a deeper understanding of this unique theatre form. Up to now there have been no translations of Kathakali plays, and only a few short passages of verse and compressed descriptions of the plot lines of several famous plays are found in general introductory texts. Therefore, this is the first attempt to provide an English translation of a scene from a famous Kathakali play with some essential stage directions and notes, to better acquaint western readers with the richness of the dramatic texts and their unique composition.

The Kathakali plays, or *attakathas* (*atta* means "play" or "dance" and *katha* means "story"), consist mainly of *slokas* (verses) and *padas* (songs to be interpreted through dance and gestures). Both are sung in *ragas* (melodic scales) appropriate to the sentiments of the story. *Slokas* are sung without the restrictions of *tala* (time measure or rhythm), and *padas*, which are intended to be danced and acted, are accompanied by various *talas* and *kalas* (tempos). The *padas* are usually subdivided into three sections: a *pallavi* (refrain), an *anupallavi* (sub-refrain) and several *charanam* (literally, the "foot"). In some *padas* the *anupallavi* is not found.

To illustrate the form in which *attakathas* are usually composed, a brief segment of *Kalyana sougandhika* by the Raja of Kottayam has been chosen. This prince is credited with originating Kathakali by fashioning it out of diverse theatre forms in the seventeenth century. He has the added distinction of contributing four plays to its repertory during his lifetime, all of which are still popular today.

The story of *Kalyana sougandhika* is taken from the *Mahabharata* and deals with an incident which occurs during the exile of the Pandavas. One day Bhimasena (the second of the five brothers) was conversing with his wife, Panchali (also called Draupadi). Suddenly a divine flower -- the *sougandhika* -- is blown in by the wind. Panchali expresses a desire to have more of the wondrous flowers, whereupon Bhima sets out to fulfill her wish. On his way through the forest, he accidently stumbles over an old monkey (actually Hanuman, Bhima's step-brother). Failing to recognize Hanuman, Bhima abuses him for daring to obstruct the path of so brave and powerful a warrior as himself. In the trial of strength which follows, Bhima is unable to move even the tail of the old monkey; he is now sadder but wiser. Eventually Hanuman reveals his true identity and chastizes Bhima for his braggadocio manner. Obeying Hanuman's directions and with his blessings, Bhima continues his journey, gathers more flowers from the heavenly garden of Dubera, god of wealth, and returns with his precious treasure to Panchali, who is overjoyed. The particular segment of the story illustrated here occurs at the very beginning of the action when Panchali first discovers the *sougandhika* flower.

In Kathakali there is always ample scope for improvising selected portions of an *attakatha* once the *padas* of a particular section have been completed. These improvisations (*ilaki-attom*) are acted out by a dancer in *mudras* (gestures and sign language) expanding on the story through incidents germane to the plot and always serving to test the skill and imagination of the actor. The improvisations used in *Kalyana sougandhika* are often based on the verses of Neelakanta's Sanskrit play of the same title, a *vyayoga* (one of the shorter and lesser-known dramatic types found in ancient India). This play was once staged as a *kooti-attom*, the traditional method of staging Sanskrit dramas in Kerala, by the *chakyars* of the temples. Although the play is no longer acted, some attempts are now being made to revive it. Selected *slokas* from the play provide the Kathakali actors with ideas and pictures to incorporate into their improvisations at appropriate places in the *attakatha*. How great the expertise of the actor is can be measured by the way he uses subtlety and imagination when incorporating the ideas from the classical Sanskrit play and mythology into the improvisations without losing the interest of the spectators.

A Scene from *Kalyana sougandhika*

by

The Raja of Kottayam

(When the preliminary rituals are completed, the musicians sing the following *sloka* in *sankarabharana raga*. In the meantime, stage attendants hold up the front curtain.)

sloka

> Later when the season was favorable to lovers [i.e., spring],
> Bhima, who was in a sportive mood
> And moved about the forest where flowering creepers
>   danced in the mountain breeze,
> Spoke to his wife who was also playfully inclined.

(The curtain is removed revealing Bhima and Panchali in a close embrace, thus establishing the dominant sentiment of the scene [*sringara* -- literally, "the erotic"]. They stand apart, and to the rhythm of the following song, Bhima, in turn, gazes with pleasure at his wife, shows delight in the cooling breeze and its delicate fragrance, and pauses as if to listen to the enchanting song of the *koils* [birds of love].)

(The singers perform Bhima's *pada* in the same *raga* and *chempata tala*, slow tempo, as he acts out the sentiments of the *pallavi* and the *anupallavi*.)

pada

Pallavi: Daughter of King Panchala,
Lotus-eyed one,
Residence of the God of Love,

Anupallavi: Let not this continual sojourn in the forest
Cause you sorrow.

(As the *pallavi* and the *anupallavi* are repeated in the background, Bhima places his right hand lightly on Panchali's breast. Then he dances the *charanam* of the *pada*.)

Charanam 1: Here in the enjoyable breeze,
Cool, drunk with the fragrance of flowers,
Dancing about us;
With the *koils* sweetly singing,
As the harmless deer take flight
At the sight of your eyes,
Here, on this flat stone,
Let us sit and enjoy the springtime.

Charanam 2: See the beauties of this season,
Flowers which ladies love;
The beautiful lotuses in the lake
Attract the beetles
Which fearlessly, having drunk of their sweet nectar,
Fly away to the forest humming.

(Panchali acts the following *sloka* in *mukhari raga*. At first her gestures indicate that she senses the divine fragrance of a flower. Seeing the bees, she spies the *saugandhika* flower blown in by the wind. She picks it up carefully, savors its beauty and wonderful aroma, then shows it to Bhima.)

sloka

Panchali, having picked up the flower,
Wafted by the wind as if out of love [for his son's wife --
Bhima is the son of Vayu, god of wind]
Beautiful, heart-stealing, divine,
Attracting countless bees with its aroma,
Approached Bhima and spoke joyfully.

(Panchali dances the next *pada* which is set in *mukhari raga* and *champata tala*, medium tempo.)

pada

Pallavi: See this flower, my lord;

Charanam 1: If I have your good will
Surely I can get
Many more of these *sougandhika* flowers.

Charanam 2: Nowhere in the world is there a flower
Comparable to this, handsome lord,
I am beside myself with joy.

Charanam 3: Whatever it be,
To none other than their lords
Do noble ladies
Speak about their desires.

(Bhima responds to Panchali's words with great satisfaction and enacts the following *pada* in *kalyani raga* and *chempata tala*, medium tempo.)

pada

Pallavi : Gem among ladies, please listen.

Charanam 1: These flowers that you fancy,
Doe-eyed one,
Without a doubt
I shall fetch.

Charanam 2: Be they on the tops of mountains,
Be they in Indra's world,
It is effortless work for me
To win them with my prowess.

(The following dialogue, *ilaki-attom*, is improvised by the actors in gestures alone without the accompaniment normally provided by the singers. Its length varies according to the ability of the actors and to the time allotted them.)

ilaki-attom

Bhima: Now I shall proceed immediately to seek and obtain the *sougandhika* flowers. Please go to my brother and stay with him until I return. I shan't be long.

Panchali: I shall get a package of food for your journey.

Bhima: Goodness me! You have already provided it! Your meaningful and soul-stirring glances are sustenance enough for me.

(Panchali blushes and lowers her head shyly. As she takes leave of Bhima, she repeatedly casts shy glances in his direction. Bhima looks at her longingly, then turns his back, signifying to the spectators a change of scene.)

(The following action is performed by Bhima alone and concerns his amazing adventures on the journey to heaven. First Bhima describes the forest. Then he seems to proceed as if drawn in the wake of the distinctive aroma left by the flower. Soon he comes upon the Gandha Madana, a king among mountains, whose shining peaks are adorned with a crown of multi-colored clouds and whose gleaming rivers appear to be garlands of pearls. Bhima improvises the following bit of dialogue to himself.)

ilaki-attom

Bhima: All right. I shall ascend the mountain. Why, it is covered with trees and winding creepers! How shall I penetrate them? I shall clear a pathway with my mace.

(At this point Bhima imitates the various wild animals fleeing in terror at his approach.)

(The ideas contained in the following two *slokas*, usually sung at the end of this scene behind the curtain as a bridge to the next scene, are useful to the actor who is improvising this segment of the story. The *slokas* are sung in *madhyamavathi raga*.)

sloka

Thus having been requested by his lady-love,
The high-spirited Bhima strode up through the huge mountain forest.
At his whirlwind progress
Wild beasts ran away with frightened cries
Which could easily be mistaken for the cry of pain
Coming from the mountain at the impact of his steps.

sloka

For the daring Bhima,
The meaningful, soul-stirring glances of his wife at parting
Proved an ample substitute for the food package
    usually carried by travelers.
His mere pace cleared the place of all wild beasts; and progressing thus, he reached a plantain grove.

(During the description of the forest at the beginning of Bhima's journey, the actor usually portrays a scene known as *ajagarakabalanam*. In it he describes an elephant browsing peacefully who is suddenly caught about the leg by a giant python and dragged into a nearby cave. The elephant trumpets wildly and tries to extricate its foot from the mouth of the python. Attracted by the uproar, a lion rushes to the scene, growls and jumps on the head of the elephant attempting to crack open its skull. The actor depicts the action of each animal in quick succession when relating the incident. The idea for this scene is derived from a verse in the Sanskrit drama, *Kalyana Sougandhika*, which begins "Anthar guhagatha mahajagarasyadamshtroho....")

(On his journey, Bhima also describes the *kinnaras* [a sect of demi-gods] who inhabit the region. Some *kinnara* ladies are discovered singing, some play the veena, some the mridanga, some the flute; others are cooking meat and still others drink liquor. The verse which forms the basis for this scene is also found in the Sanskrit play previously mentioned and begins "Nrityanchi kwachidatra....")

(A scene of the *siddha* [another sect of demi-gods] damsels swinging in a golden swing is also portrayed by some actors. The verse also comes from the same play and begins "Manipalakamanojna swarna doladhi roodha....")

(Thus, describing these various scenes and incidents along his journey, Bhima enters the plantain grove in a haughty manner, soon to be chastized by the old monkey, Hanuman.)

Unnayi Varyyar

NAḶA CARITAM ĀṬṬAKATHA

An introduction and
translation of a Kathakali
play by V. Subramanya Iyer,
edited by Farley Richmond

Translator's Introduction

Kathakaḷi, the art form as we know it today, cannot be more than three hundred and fifty years old. Still its origin is shrouded in obscurity. Scholars and literary critics have advanced various theoies based on anecdotes and traditions, all of which are unsupported by evidence that can stand scrutiny. All are agreed, however, that the first Āṭṭakathas, were the eight plays dealing with the Ramayaṇam story, known as Ramānaṭṭam, composed by the prince of Koṭṭārakkara about the mid-sixteenth century. Though their texts are still available, only three of them, *Sītā Swayamvaram, Bāli Vadham* and *Tōrana Yudham,* are commonly acted today. Certainly they deserve some recognition as a pioneering effort but their literary merit is not of a high order and if they stand the test of time, it may be due more to the reflected glory of the original author, Valmiki, than to their specific contribution to the creation of a unique art form.

The next Āṭṭakatha composer was the Raja of Kōṭṭayam (Malabar) who wrote four plays, *Baka Vadham Kirmira Vadham, Kalyāṇa Saugandhikam and Kalakēya Vadham* in the late seventeen century. These are justly famous for their high literary merit and impressive diction. The author's mastery of Sanskrit grammar is evident in all the slokas of the plays. The padas have a grandeur all their own. Figures of speech abound throughout. These plays, especially *Kalakēya Vadham* and *Kirmira Vadham* are great favorites with Kathakaḷi fans and actors too, because they afford occasion for the star actors to exhibit their skill in mime and in dance. Notable examples are the description of heaven by Arjuna in *Kalakēya Vadham* and that of the forest by Bhimasenan in *Kalyāna Saugandhikam* and the Aṣṭa Kalaśas (vigorous and complex passages of dance) in both of them.

Those were days when Kathakaḷi had not attained a set pattern even in the matter of dress and make-up of the actors. The Koṭṭayam plays created a sensation among Bhagavathars, actors and Kathakaḷi connoisseurs. By trials and experiments, they made the most of the choreographic possibilities of the padas. That pattern has been handed down from teacher to pupil to modern times and the Bhagavathars, the actors and the musical accompanists strictly adhere to them even now. This special advantage the Kōṭṭayam plays enjoyed is probably one reason why they are rated higher than their intrinsic merits justify.

While scholars like Āttur have praised these plays to the skies, Mr. Kuttikrishna Marar, the prince of literary critics, has not failed to draw attention to some of their drawbacks. If you concede Āṭṭakathas should have dramatic appeal, you would have to emphasize that characterization should be the basic test of their excellence. From this angle, the Kōṭṭayam plays do not compare favorably with *Naḷa Caritam Āṭṭakatha*, for instance. No doubt in places the Kōṭṭayam plays do exhibit skill in characterization as in the case of Dharmaputra and Lalita in *Kirmīra Vadham* and Arjuna (in some scenes) in *Kalakēya Vadham*. And the greater is the credit due to the author when it is remembered that the above instances are deviations from the original Pūraṇic story or pure inventions of the composer. But one has to confess that in these plays there is no sustained effort to stick to characterization as the basic moving force for the drama. The ślokas and padas are good literary efforts in themselves but scarcely serve a well thought out purpose in the advancement of the plot or the unfolding of character. In places they do just the opposite. As a stage in the development of Kathakaḷi, the Kōṭṭayam plays do have an honorable niche; but to make out, as some orthodox connoisseurs of Āṭṭakatha attempt to do, that they are the last word in Kathakaḷi, is to betray ignorance of the world's finest dramatic literature.

When we have an Āṭṭakatha like *Naḷa Caritam* composed by Uṇṇayi Vāryyar in the eighteenth century, closely following or contemporaneous with the Kōṭṭayam plays, this attitude seems all the more inexplicable, for, *Naḷa Caritam Āṭṭakatha* can well claim a place among the world's best dramas. It has all the standard merits of the Kōṭṭayam plays in the matter of literary merit -- rhyme and rhythm, musical charm and humor; but its unique mastery is in its splendid characterizations. Vāryyar has taken the Pūraṇic characters as they are, but he has dealt with them as a master craftsman handles a piece of uncut diamond to make a gem of it. And this applies not only to the important characters but to the meanest ones, who are mere impersonal names in the Purānic story. The Swan, the Kaṭṭalan, (forest dweller), the servant Kēsini and the band of traders to take only a few instances, are mere milestones in the progress of the plot of the original. In the Āṭṭakatha each one of them not only develops a face and unique features, but you end up striking a permanent acquaintance with them.

A detailed study of the deviations from the original is beyond the scope of this introduction; but some references might help to develop an appreciation of Vāryyar's genius. In Part One, the conversation between Naḷa and the Devas about the former being their messenger to press their suit has far more human appeal and dignity in the Āṭṭakatha version than in the *Mahābhārata*. Again the final scene of Part Three between Kaḷi and Naḷa is a masterpiece, far out-shining the Purāṇic version. Indeed Vāryyar often dares to push situations to such a complex climax that one wonders how he would get out of it without producing a feeling of anti-climax. His skill works wonders. An excellent example of this is the memorable scene in Part Four between Bāhuka (Naḷa disguised as a charioteer) and Damayantī and later between Naḷa and Damayantī before they finally make up. In these the author paints a mental struggle that goes on in the mind of the hero which never fails of dramatic appeal.

These observations are equally valid in the case of Damayantī. In Part One when Naḷa threatens her as the messenger of the Devas, she remains unmoved.[1] When she prays to the very Devas to help her select the right Naḷa from among all those disguised to resemble him, she does not forget to remind them of *their* duty. Again in the Purāṇic story Damayantī sends his two children with the maid Kēsini to visit Bāhuka so that she could study her reactions when they meet. Vāryyar has deliberately omitted it from his play to imply that his prestigious heroine cannot bring herself to allow this dubious test with her royal offspring until more definite proof of the identity of Bāhuka is forthcoming.

The other characters in the Purāṇic story are faceless robots used only to move the plot. Vāryyar, on the other hand, has dealt with them with masterly skill and finesse. In the very first padas of Pushkāra in Part Two, for instance, there are hints of latent frustrations and jealousy which fit him for the part he has to play in the sequel. Again in his loquacious speech after he has won the dice play, he betrays such woeful lack of dignity and taste that the audience can see him for what he is: a crude, mean louse.

Rtuparṇa is the foil for the hero of the play. To fit that part he is made out into a simpleton and prone to speak or act without mature thought. Both these aspects are hinted at in the very first interview between him and Bāhuka in Part Three. He repeats his consent to employ Bāhuka and, what is more, discusses the incompetency of his two charioteers in their very presence to a mere stranger! Suffice it to say, it would be a treat for the reader (and the audience) to scrutinize Rtuparṇa's subsequent words and actions from this angle.

At the same time, it has to be noticed, the author has been careful not to make him too ridiculous lest it should adversely reflect on the glory of the hero. When Rtuparṇa, for instance, reaches Kuṇḍinapura at dusk, beating the sun in the race and feels like one who has stepped on a stair which is not there, Vāryyar lends him all his own skill and ingenuity to get out of a sorry plight with some semblance of dignity!

The *hamsa* (swan) is another character drawn with consummate skill and unexcelled human interest. In Part I when he is caught unaware, he pleads for his life, like any other bird with an instinct for self-preservation; but once his sense of gratitude is roused, he is a different personality altogether. He is a past master in psychology in his approach to Damayantī to whom he first discloses he has more than a bird's brain. The manner in which he isolates her from her maids, the slightly unflattering approach to impress her, the quick turn of the conversation to emphasize his good will towards her and thereby secure her confidence, his oracular blessing touching her weak spot and the deftness with which he introduces the subject of Naḷa -- all are managed with delicate and planned skill.[2] The Swan is deservedly a cherished favorite with Kathakali fans.

The *kāṭṭālan* (forest dweller) is yet another example of Vāryyar's mastery at characterization. In the Purāṇic version the Kāṭṭālan saves her from the snake and attempts to embrace her and is promptly killed by her curse. The one in Part Two of the Āṭṭakatha is a refined fellow in his own way. His is a case of more than love at first sight; it is love at first hearing! The author details his crude attempts at wooing with delightful humor[3] tinged with a veneer of pathos. Though he knows she is helpless, he scrupulously eschews force. His worst fault is an understandable human weakness engendered by the circumstances of the case, reprehensible all the same, but pitiable in the result.

The *brāhmin* Sudēva is another minor character drawn with great care. In his first interview with Damayantī at the Chedi palace in Part Two, he may appear somewhat unsympathetic to her description of her woes. His true nature is, however, unfolded when she asks for his help at their second interview in Part Three. In his replies he not only proves his ability to discharge the delicate task entrusted to him, but displays his haste to serve her, assures her of his loyalty and betrays his high spirits. Indeed, after his advent the plot itself seems to move more rapidly!

In fact, no character in the play is too insignificant to attract the skill of the author. The clean-minded leader of the merchants in Part Two who can assess strangers even under difficult circumstances and honor and help appropriately, the pert but shrewd Kēsini in Part Four who more than qualifies herself for the errand entrusted to her -- both stand out as clear specimens of humanity taking on an identity. Why, the author, even like a master artist who can create an expressive face with a dash of his brush, gives pen sketches of three types among the merchants,[4] with single expressions incorporated in śloka 16 of Part Two.

In this context one aspect of the composition of this Āṭṭakatha deserves special notice. Vāryyar has exercised the greatest restraint in shaping the padas and ślokas to suit the stage of the plot and the characters. He never allows his literary fluency or poetic skill to outrun the needs of the context as some other Āṭṭakatha authors unwittingly do, obviously carried away by the poetic beauty of the piece. Vāryyar's ślokas, for instance, scrupulously discharged their legitimate task of carrying forward the plot. They meander when the plot has to move as a brook crossing a level meadow but develop all the glory of a mountain stream when the occasion demands. Again, even if one does not understand the language, one would sense the pace of the plot and the tempo of the conversation when one hears the padas sung. In a word, there is no aspect of composition which has escaped the attention and care of the author, witness the naturalness and artistry of the division of the play into four parts. *Naḷa Caritam* is indeed a classic among Āṭṭakathas!

A word about the other extant Āṭṭakathas is in order here. The advent of Kathakali as a novel art form fired at once the imagination and ambition of scholars and poets. It became the fashion for all and sundry to try their hand at composing at least one Āṭṭakatha. In an edition printed thirty-seven years ago there is a list totalling 11 plays. Many of them remain literary curiosities. In this list fall the Āṭṭakathas composed by three[5] top-ranking poets of Kerala, including Vallathol Narayana Menon, the founder of Kerala Kalamandalam. It is a tribute to the selfless love of that great poet for Kathakaḷi that even with all the facilities and authority at his command he never tried to popularize his own Āṭṭakatha *Ōmshadha Haranam* And this has a moral both for Āṭṭakatha composers as well as critics. There is more in a good Āṭṭakatha than mere poetry, however fine it may be. And that explains why some recent adaptations of some excellent heroic poems into Āṭṭakatha forms have not succeeded in winning popularity.

The three plays of Irayimman Thampi, *Kīchaka Vadham*, *Ūttara Swayamvaram* and *Dakshāyagam* are deservedly popular for their fine music and literary merit. *Rājasūyam* of H. H. Karthika Thirunal and *Ambarisha Charitham* and *Pūthana Mooksham* of H. H. Aswathi Thirunal have stood the test of time and rank high among Kathakaḷi fans. *Kuchela Vritham* of Sankaran Potti, *Kiratam* of Iraṭṭukuḷaṅṅara Vāryyar, *Santanagōpalam* and *Rugmangatha Caritam* of Ittirarissa Menon are all popular as much for their religious appeal as for their literary charm. *Duryodhana Vadham* of Vayaskara Mūss remains popular as much for its number and variety of actors as for its quick tempo and dramatic movement. This list, however, should not be considered exhaustive.

In recent times a number of new Āṭṭakathas have been composed and acted. Some are based on old subjects like *Sākuntalam*, *Srī Sankara Vijayam*, *Manikantan* (Srī Ayyappan) or *Thilothamma*. Two Āṭṭākathas are adaptations of Sohrab and Rustum and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. All these plays are quite enjoyable but they have not yet become popular, probably because Kathakaḷi fans, actors, and Bhāgavathars are somewhat conservative and the old days of patronage are no more.

All this takes us back to our original proposition that among Āṭṭakathas, Uṇṇāyi Vāryyar's *Naḷa Caritam* stands out in all its solitary grandeur.

NAḶA CARITAM ĀṬṬAKATHA

(Following the preliminary rituals, the singers chant Śloka 1 in *toṭi rāga*[6])

Śloka 1

Long ago, in the heavenly land of Niṣadha
Shone the world-hero King Naḷa, Son of Vīrasena.
Just, beautiful as the God of Love,
His fame spread far and wide.

(During the śloka, stage attendants stretch the brightly colored curtain behind the flickering oil lamp masking Naḷa's entrance. To show his respect for the power of the music and the musicians the actor offers obeisance after which the curtain is removed. Naḷa performs an introductory dance[7] which accentuates *śṛṅgāra rasa*, the sentiment of love, accompanied by Pada 1 set in *toṭi rāga* and *campaṭa tāla*.)

Pada 1

The heroic lord of Niṣadha lived happily in his palace.

This scion of the moon race wisely ruled and protected his people for many years.

The fire of his prowess reduced his enemies to smoke
And filled the world with the perfume of his endless goodness.

Beautiful. Admirable! He who is served by famous ministers,
He who nurtures the arts within himself,
Center of the admiring world,
He is the World-Protector!

His story is the very antidote for the evils of *Kālī*.
Like Indra -- invincible.
Bhakta of Viṣṇu and Śiva.
Indescribable! Inaccessible!

(At the conclusion of the dance the front curtain is stretched taut once more to mask a stage attendant who places a small stool covered with a cloth on which Nala sits. Nārada enters and pays obeisance to the musicians as the singers chant Śloka 2 set in *mukhārī rāga*.

Śloka 2

Thus in the reign of King Naḷa
The great sage Nārada,
Son of Brahma,
Paid as unexpected visit.

(As the curtain is removed Nārada dances toward Naḷa from stage left. The singers and drummers perform Pada 2 in the same *rāga* and *aṭanta tāla.*)

Pada 2

Honored Nārada, I bow before you.

(Naḷa rises and supplicates himself before Nārada who blesses him. Naḷa offers his throne chair to Nārada and then proceeds to dance the remaining portion of the pada.)

You have blessed my house with your presence
And washed me of my sins.

Tell me, Oh Son of Brahmā, from where have you journeyed?

As the water-lily blooms only when bathed in moonlight,
So my heart flowers in the radiance of your presence.

Storehouse of penance, be pleased to ask anything and know that you shall receive it.

(Nārada steps forward and dances his reply in Pada 3, set in *saurāṣṭra rāga, murhaṭanta tāla.*)

Pada 3

Lord of Niṣadha, despair of your enemies,
Give ear to my counsel
And waste not your birthright.

Rarely do I long remain in one place.
For I enjoy traveling the length and breadth of the fourteen worlds causing people to act!

In Kaṇḍinapūr there lives a beauty,
A gem anong women,
Damayantī by name.
Even the *devas* have fallen in love with her.

But mark me.
Jewels rightfully belong to kings.
The *devas* may claim only *yajñas* offered in their honor.
Perfect one, paragon among kings,
Strive to win this jewel for your wife.

(The remainder of the scene is improvised by the dancers accompanied only by the drums; however, it conveys the following exchange of ideas:

> Naḷa: If the *devas* are her suitors, what chance have I?
> Nārada: You are certain to win, for her heart is set on you alone.
> Naḷa: Please tell me how to proceed.
> Nārada: Before long, King Bhīma, Damayantī's father, will issue an invitation to her *svayamvara* to which you must go. At first you will encounter some difficulties but eventually she will choose you. Now I must depart. Farewell.

Nārada blesses Naḷa and retires from the stage. Naḷa turns his back to the spectators implying a change of scene as the singers chant Śloka 3 in *kalyānī rāga*.)

Śloka 3

Having heard Nārada's words
Which reinforced the glowing reports travellers had given of Damayantī,
Naḷa grew anxious
And a sense of despair fell over him.

(Naḷa turns and dances his feelings of intense longing in the same *rāga* and *campaṭa tāla*.)

Pada 4

Often have I heard it said that no earthly lady can compare
With the daughter of the King of Kaṇḍinapur.

And now Nārada's words confirm even more:
She is unrivaled in heaven and in the other worlds.

Long have I heard her accomplishments extolled.
Daily my adoration for her has grown.
And now the sage suggests that my affections are not misplaced.

But how may I arouse a like response in her?
By what means may I chance to meet the lady with the moon-like countenance?
For if romance is to flower in her mind
Kāmadeva must first plant the tuber of a lotus of love there.

Reports of her unexcelled beauty intoxicate me
And I am unable to concentrate on my kingly duties.
Only two alternatives remain:
Either I must meet the lady whose locks resemble the clouds,
Or my life will surely end in soliture, nursing my heartache.

(Naḷa dances an interpolated passage based on the following sentiments:

> Naḷa: My love for the princess has seriously upset me. What shall I do? If others see me in this state, they will surely ridicule me. Since I am unable to concentrate on my kingly duties, it is only right that I entrust them to my minister and seek the comfort of seclusion.

Naḷa gestures as though calling his minister to come forth. He greets the imaginary minister and proceeds.

> Naḷa: My trusted minister, I am retiring to the garden to rest. Discharge my duties in my absence.

Naḷa's gestures indicate that he transfers his sceptre of state to the minister and dismisses him. Then he starts to leave, hesitates and finally resolves to go.

> Naḷa: Now I shall go to the garden!

(The curtain is raised at the conclusion of the scene and the singers chant Śloka 4 in *vekata rāga*.)

Śloka 4

Provoked by the *muni's* words
The King was immersed in sorrow
Caused by Kāmadeva's arrows.
Thus he transferred the reigns of state to his trusted minister
And led a solitary life in the flower garden.

(The curtain is drawn aside and Naḷa dances Pada 5, set in the same *rāga* and *muṟiyaṭanta tāla*.)

Pada 5

The only virtue of this garden is that no one is here.
Iswara and Kāmadeva are now my greatest enemies.

Tormented by the pangs of separation,
It is ironical that I am surrounded by the very things best suited to increase my pain,
With one exception, the image of my fawn-eyed lady.

This garden appears to be the military headquarters of Madana, my powerful foe:
The trees by the banks of the lake are his soldiers' tents,
The flowers are his arsenals,
The song birds are his trumpeteers,
And the scent-laden breezes march about me.
Indeed, this is a dreadful spot for a broken-hearted lover.

(The tempo increases.)

But look! Among the many-colored swans sporting on the lake
There is one with a golden hue
That is most appealing.
What a lovely bird!

(A *pallavi* in the same *rāga* and *tāla* bridges the Pada with the next Śloka.)

If only I could catch it, how splendid it would be.

(Naḷa exists and the curtain is raised to conceal the entrance of the Swan. As the actor pays his obeisance to the singers, drummers and stage, Śloka 5 is chanted in the same *rāga*.)

Śloka 5

At the height of his sorrow
Naḷa viewed with disinterest the flowery creepers and lush shade trees.
Then he spied a golden swan that had fallen asleep
Exhausted from love-play.

(The curtain is withdrawn revealing the Swan who sits on the stool upstage center. The Swan dances an interpolated passage to the accompaniment of the drums. Slowly he seems to awaken from sleep. Then he rises from the stool shaking his body and spreading his wings to the punctuated beat of the drums. He shakes his wings one at a time and looks in all directions as a bird might do when awakened from sleep. Slowly he dances in a wide circle around the playing area halting downstage center to clean his wings with his beak: up and down, right and left. At last he spreads his wings as though to fly and makes a sweeping circle of the stage to the accelerating tempo. Eventually he shows signs of fatigue, settles in one spot, folds his wings close to his body and seems to lie exhausted on the stage floor in a graceful sleep. Naḷa enters from stage left and approaches the Swan cautiously as the singers chant Śloka 6 in *khaṇṭāra rāga*.

Śloka 6

Filled with anticipation and desire to tame the bird,
Naḷa silently approahced the sleeping swan.
But when he caught its wings with their invaluable golden color,
The bird fluttered helplessly and cried out piteously.

(Rudely awakened the Swan attempts to escape from Naḷa's grasp, first flying one direction and then another, but to no avail. Finally, Naḷa releases the bird who dances Pada 6 set in the same *rāga* and *murīyaṭanta tāla* markedly increased in tempo.)

Pada 6

Oh Lord, what shall I do? Oh, Lord, the King will surely kill me!

Hereafter my family which has fallen on evil days will perish without my support.

My dear departed father left me, his only son, to protect my aged mother.
And my wife, who is big with child, will surely die of grief if my life
  should end.
So my whole family will be extinguished at a stroke, if I perish.

Oh gracious King, if you kill me you will commit a grevious sin,
Alas, the glitter of my golden feathers must have attracted your attention.
And now nature's gift has brought about my ruin.

(After the Swan completes his dance with hands folded humbly across his chest to signify that he is still in captivity, Naḷa dances Pada 7 in *sāverī rāga, aṭanta tāla.*)

Pada 7

Oh Swan, know that you have no occasion to grieve,
For I harbor no feelings of ill will towards you.
It was only my desire to see your incomparable body at close range.
I intend no harm, King of Birds, spring of goodness.
Fly where you will.
See, I release you.

(Naḷa releases the Swan who circles joyously around the stage several times and then exits. Naḷa sits on the stool upstage in a pose of contemplation as the singers chant Śloka 7 in *kamodāri raga.*[8])

Śloka 7

Released by the gracious sovereign,
The Swan rejoined his companions in the sky.
But soon he returned to the King,
Who seemed the very ocean of kindness, and he said:

(The Swan returns and bows before Naḷa with folded hands. He dances Pada 8 set in the same *rāga* and *campaṭa tāla*.)

Pada 8

Oh gracious King, I have returned to do you a favor.

None can equal your goodness in the three worlds.

You protect the earth with the flicker of your eyebrow.
The sheen of your body is a pleasure to behold.
storehouse of univeral love, everything about you deserves admiration.
Oh Kāmadeva-like one, you have yet to win a partner as noble as yourself.

King Bhīma, the capable ruler of Vidarbha,
Who appears to his enemies like the fire at the dissolution of the world,
This king, I say, has a daughter who is matchless in beauty.
If she becomes your bride, your virtues will not be wasted.
Permit me then to bring about your union with this jewel among women.

Desired by all,
Incomparable in form,
Beautiful,
Prized above all virtuous ladies,
As precious as gold, if only it had fragrance,
Faultless like Lakṣmī,
Damayantī eclipses all damsels in heaven and on earth.
This jewel of perfection, ever true to her word,
Would reject even Indra, if he tried to woo her.
To make her yours is my sworn duty.

(Naḷa approaches and dances his reply to the Swan in Pada 9 set in *toṭi rāga* and *campaṭa tāla*.)

Pada 9

Oh noble one, you who sport in the garden of Brahmā,
Report my suffering to my beloved and return to me.

Are you only flattering me
Or do you mean to second your words with deeds?

If you choose to relate my passionate suffering,
Tell her that when I learned of her lotus-like face from many sources,
An irresistible love grew within me.
And in the depths of despair, with no one to comfort me,
Providence brought you to me.

Understanding what I say,
Speaking eloquently,
Traveling thither and back again in comfort,
These make you more than a mere messenger.
But fate has bestowed you as a veritable treasure on me.

Dearest friend, devise clever words to make this jewel among women love me.
Fate will surely reward you if you do.
I have no one else upon whom to rely.
My destiny is in your hands.

(They continue to converse in a short interpolated passage containing the following ideas:

> Swan: I shall go to Damayantī at once and return shortly with her reply.

Naḷa wishes him well and reiterates that he will wait impatiently for his return. The curtain is raised to conclude the scene. The other musicians are joined by the *iṭekka* drummer as the *ceṇṭa* drummer retires to the dressing room. The singers chant Śloka 8 in *puṇṇāga varāḷī rāga*.[9])

Śloka 8

Inspired by the sincerity of Naḷa's pleas,
The Swan journeyed to Vidarbha
Where he sought refuge in a deserted clearing in the palace garden.
About the same time, Damayantī reached the garden.
Accompanied by her charming companions,
She found it difficult to constrain her passion for Naḷa
With whom she had fallen hopelessly in love.

(The curtain is removed revealing Damayantī standing between two handmaidens, her head modestly bowed in prayer. They dance the *sārī*[10] dance in unison to Pada 10 set in the same *rāga* and *campaṭa tāla*.)

Pada 10

Praise be to Brahmā and Sarasvatī.
Praise to Mother Earth,
To Kṛṣṇa and Lakṣmī.

Praise be to Śiva and Pārvatī.
Praise to the Moon and Rohīnī,
To Kāma and Ratī.

Praise be to Indra and Indranī.
Praise to all immortal couples,
Bless us with prosperity.

Praise be to the wives of famous sages.
Praise to Anasūya and to Lopamūdra,
To Lopamūdra and to Arundhāthī.

(The singers chant Śloka 9 in *toṭi rāga* as the maidens take their places to one side leaving Damayantī center stage.)

Śloka 9

Though her longing for King Naḷa was guessed by her companions,
Damayantī had never owned it, even to her closest confidant.
But when she reached the lush garden
The fire of love consumed her and she spoke.

(Damayantī dances Pada 11 in the same *rāga* and *campaṭa tāla*.)

Pada 11

Is it not better, my companions, that we rejoin my father
To whom messengers report the latest news from different parts of the world:
This is a good way to pass our time.

(One os the maid servants replies to Damayantī)

In the palace, you were keen to visit the garden!
Oh moon-faced one, pearl among women, tell me
Did we come here only to return?

Let us enjoy the pleasant garden vistas at our leisure.

(Damayantī dances Pada 12 in *duijavanthi rāga* and the same *tāla*.)

Pada 12

The humming of the beetles scorches my eardrums;
The song of the *koils* torments me;
The fragrant flowers dilate my nostrils,
Like water buffaloes churning the waters of a lake.
So this sojourn in the garden causes me considerable unhappiness.

But what do I see?
Is a bolt of lightning about to strike the earth?
Is heaven itself descending?
Is that not a golden swan flying toward us?
Indeed, the very sight of it is nectar to my eyes.

(The Swan enters from stage right and crosses to Damayantī who views him with pleasure and wonder as the singers begin Pada 13 set in *āhiri rāga*,[11] *aṭanta tāla*. Damayantī continues to dance.)

Pada 13

How attractive he appears!
Never have I seen or heard of such a one as this.

It seems certain that this golden swan desires to befriend me.

I have touched him.
But, oh my companions,
If only I could catch him, how wonderful that would be!

This beautiful one is not wild, but good-natured;
Leave me, that I may be alone with him.

(Obeying her command the maid servants retire from the stage. The singers chant Śloka 10 in *kalyāni rāga*.

Śloka 10

Walking slowly as though to suggest that he could be captured,
When Damayantī was separated from her maids,
The Swan spoke thus,
In a teasing manner:

(The Swan turns to Damayantī and dances Pada 14 set in the same *rāga* and *Aṭanta tāla*.)

Pada 14

Oh crown among women, what is at the back of your mind!

(Damayantī shows astonishment that the bird can speak.)

How can you, an earth-bound creature presume to catch me, one who flies through the air?

(She indicates her shame at having offended the bird.)

Although you are now a youth, you still behave childishly!
Seeing your lack of maturity, wise people would make fun of you.
Some might find fault and sometimes you may even lose your way.

There is no need to put me in bondage, I am your friend.
You can trust me more than your maids!

(She shyly bows her head at his suggestion.)

You desire to wed a king,
One like the God of Love,
And the one for whom you pine.

With Brahmā's permission I live in Naḷa's city
So that the damsels may learn to walk correctly:
Seductively, with graceful curving movements;
Slowly and naturally;
Perfect.
Please believe me, I am not joking.

(Damayantī dances Pada 15 set in *kamodārī rāge, campaṭa tāla.*)

Pada 15

I saw you by my side and heard your humorous words.

Oh vehicle of Brahmā, you with the heart-stealing appearance,
I have heard your playful words.

Whose messenger are you?
Do you come from Brahmā or from the city of Naḷa?
Sweet-shaped one, ocean of virtues, first among birds,
Your life story is praiseworthy.

Speak, speak to me of Naḷa's charms.
Your words banish sorrow and are a blessing to hear.

I shall tell you my constant hopes and anticipations
Should you be helpful, oh kind and noble one.

(Damayantī bows her head shyly as she anxiously awaits the Swan's reply.
The singers chant Śloka 11 in *sankarabharana rāga.)*

Śloka 11

Learning but half of Bhaimi's mind
The clever and competent bird determined to know all the thoughts
Of the ornament of her tribe, she whose speech is as fresh as honey.
To that end he spoke thus:

(The Swan dances Pada 16 in the same *rāga* and *campaṭa tāla.)*

Pada 16

Princess, speak all your thoughts in confidence.

Pretend that I am one of your maids
And without hesitation or fear shed this veil of shyness.

Gem among beauties, sister of Dama,
That man for whom you harbor loving thoughts most assuredly is lucky.
Fawn-eyed one, do not hesitate to speak
Nor allow your modesty to hide your true desires.
I am here to help you, beauteous one.
Would I ever disgrace you?
These words stand for the simple truth:
Your desire is within reach.

(Damayantī replies to the Swan in Pada 17 set in the same *rāga* and *tāla.)*

Chief of swans, what shall I tell you?

Should the true feelings treasured and hidden within the heart of a chaste maiden be divulged?

Having heard constant reports about the adorable qualities of the best-among-kings,
I installed his image in my mind.
And now the arrows of the love god have reduced me to a sighing shadow.

(The Swan dances Pada 16 in the same *rāga* and *tāla.)*

Pada 16

If you have spoken the truth, you are indeed blessed.
The good must be united with the good.
Surely none else is fit to be your husband.
Mightier than Indra, attractive in appearance,
He possesses incomparable virtues.
Your alliance is as appropriate as a gem mounted in gold.

As Viṣṇu to Rema,
As the moon to the night,
As Umā to Śiva,
So are you to Naḷa.

(Damayantī replies with the remainder of Pada 17 set in the same *rāga* and *tāla*.)

Pada 17

My heartache increases day by day.
And it is a secret I have not shared even with my most intimate maids.
Report all this to the king without delay,
But choose an appropriate moment to do so.

(The Swan concludes his dance with the remaining portion of Pada 16 set in the same *rāga* and *tāla*.)

Pada 16

I shall inform the king as you desire.
And no doubt he too will be as enamored with you as you are with him.
But would you start bestowing your favors on others as well?
For if you do, the king will surely ridicule me.
Suppose your father contracts you to another?
In time you will learn to love him
And all these fine words will make me a laughing stock.
Such a sequel is not impossible
So answer me at once, I beg you.

(Damayantī concludes the scene by dancing the final verse of Pada 17.)

What! Oh Swan, why do you even think such things?
Would my heart ever be so frivolous?
It is natural that the river joins the sea.
Would the mountain wish it otherwise?

(A brief interpolated passage follows:

Swan: I shall return to Naḷa who is waiting impatiently for me.
I will inform him of your feelings and relieve his anxiety.

So saying they take leave of each other and exit[12] from the stage concluding the scene. The curtain is raised and the *iṭekka* player retires from the stage. The drummers are rejoined by the *ceṇṭa* drummer. While the singers chant Śloka 12 in *saveri* *rāga*, Naḷa enters and seats himself on the stool stage left, which is now taken to be a bench in his garden.)

Śloka 12

Carrying the views given expression to by Damayantī's entrancing face
The Swan quickly flew to Naḷa
And delivered the message of the fawn-eyed one.

(The curtain is withdrawn revealing Naḷa who quickly rises to greet the Swan who enters from stage right. Naḷa's gestures indicate that he desires to know if the Swan has met Damayantī and what has been the outcome of their meeting. The Swan replies in Pada 18 set in the same *rāga* and *aṭanta tāla.)*

Pada 18

Oh King, your wish has almost been fulfilled.

No longer need you exhaust yourself floundering helplessly in the sea of passion engendered by the God of Love.

(Naḷa replies in Pada 19 set in the same *rāga* and *tāla.)*

Pada 19

Chief among birds, my desires and life are in your hands.

Tell me, tell me quickly, how you went and met and delivered my message!

(The Swan replies with the remainder of Pada 18 bringing the scene to its conclusion.)

Pada 18

Quickly I reached Kuṇḍinapūr and waited in the garden.
And then, as if by coincidence, Damayantī came there,
In a playful mood, accompanied by her well-adorned maid servants.

When she approached as though desiring to catch me,
I eluded her without ruffling my feathers.
When she realized that I was leading her astray on purpose,
I turned and confronted her.

Oh King, please know that I did as you bade.
I uncovered her innermost thoughts by tact
And found that her affections dwell only on you.
I learned of her affections not merely by the inferences I made
But I caused her to admit them in so many words.
And what is more, I shhok her resolve
To fix it more firmly.

(As the singer relates the concluding action in Śloka 13 set in the same *rāga*, the Swan continues to dance.)

Śloka 13

"I have bound your heart to that of Damayantī.
And even if Indra in person were to attempt to break the knot he would fail.
This being so, how can anyone else hope to succeed?
When you think of me I shall return."
[Without further ado the Swan flew away and disappeared.]

(Having heard this report, Naḷa affectionately bids farewell to the Swan and watches his graceful, circular flight. After the Swan has made his exit Naḷa enacts a short interpolated passage:

> Naḷa: At last my anxiety is over. Thanks to the blessings of Nārada, I am sure to win her. Now let me return to my court.

(Ślokas 14 through 19 and Padas 20 and 21 are rarely acted today perhaps, because the action therein is incidental to the main plot; but they appear in whole as follows. Slokas 14, 15 and 16 continue in *saveri rāga*.)

Śloka 14

At that time, famed Indra,
Contented,
Served by many *deva*-ladies,
Accompanied by his faithful queen, Indranī,
Reigned happily in his heavenly palace.

Śloka 15

As a lion in his den,
As the moon in the sky,
So shone the famous court adorned by Indra.

Śloka 16

To the splendor of the court
Agni, Yama and Varuṇa lent the luster of their presence.

(The singers continue Śloka 17 set in *saurāṣṭra rāga*.

Śloka 17

About the time that Bhīma, who knew that his daughter had fallen in love with Naḷa,
About the time that he was arranging a *svayamvara,*
The famous sage Parvathan spoke to Narada who was on his way to heaven.
"Nārada, where are you going in such a hurry?"
"To heaven, Parvathan."
"And what might be your business there?"
"I wish to speak with Indra about certain matters."
"May I know what matters, Nārada?"
"You may accompany me."
"Would my journey be fruitless?"
"We may enquire if there is to be a fight between seasoned warriors, Parvathan."
"Are there no battles among the kings on earth?"
"All the kings have become enamored of Damayantī!"

(The singers chant Śloka 18 in *mukhari rāga.*

Śloka 18

When he saw Nārada and Parvathan approach,
Indra received his guests as befits a gracious host.
He spoke sweet words to Nārada who replied in a like manner.

(The curtain is removed and Indra and Nārada are revealed. Indra dances Pada 20 in *mukhari rāga, aṭanta tāla.)*

Pada 20

Nārada, son of Brahmā,
You who add to the pleasure of others,
You who expiate all sins by your mightly penance,
You who shine like the clouds after the monsoon,
You are most welcome here.

(Narada dances Pada 21 in *madhyamāvathi rāga* and in the same *tāla.)*

Pada 21

Lord of the worlds,
Vāsava,
Good-natured one,
Dread of your enemies,
Storehouse of radiant virtues,
Are you doing well?

(Indra replies in Pada 20 set in the same *rāga* and *tāla*.)

Pada 20

Yes, I am doing fairly well.
In any case, it is fortunate that you have visited me.
I have a great uncertainty in my mind as to which sage you are.
Perhaps you can resolve this difficulty.

(Nārada continues Pada 21.)[13]

Pada 21

I have a desire
Which you can easily satisfy.
I crave to see a fight.
In case you can arrange one, I shall return the favor by blessing you, Indra.

(Indra replies with the middle part of Pada 20.)

Wars are rare now that my brother Viṣṇu's discuss holds the *asuras* in check.
Ordinarily men who die in righteous combat should come here,
But now no one comes.
Why is this so, do you think?

(Nārada dances the middle part of Pada 21.)

Pada 21

The King of Vidarbha has a daughter whose charms are incomparable.
No other lady can equal her beauty.
It is said a *svayamvara* is fixed.
People have started on their journey to attend.
Kings are making ready.
All are propitiating the gods both day and night in the hope that they will be blessed by winning her.

(Indra dances the last part of Pada 20.)

Pada 20

I would like to know who deserves her?
He is certainly lucky.
If you can guess his good qualities
I request that you describe them to me, for they are desirable and sweet to hear.

(Nārada dances the last part of Pada 21.)

Pada 21

She is resolved to have only one person.
No one seems to know who he is, so how can I tell?
Whoever he is, he would certainly desire to win her
Because her charms surpass even those of the ladies of heaven.
But let this matter rest; I must go to earth.
Perhaps during her *svayamvara* there may be some quarrels among the kings
assembled there.

(The actors retire from the stage and Yama, the God of Death, enters behind the curtain. After paying his respects to the musicians and musical instruments, he makes an elaborate *tiranōkku* entrance from behind the curtain.[14] The highlight of most *tiranōkkus* is the first partial appearance of the actor when he slowly lowers the center of the curtain allowing the spectators to see his elaborate headdress and facial makeup. This act is heightened by passages of drumming which accent the movements of the dancer's eyes, head and hands. At the conclusion of the *tiranōkku*, the curtain is removed and Yama does a brief passage of interpolated dance conveying the following sentiments:

Yama: Today is Damayantī's *svayamavara* to which I will go with the other *digpālās* -- Indra, Varuṇa and Agni.

The three gods enter from stage right.

Yama: And although Damayantī has already wed Naḷa in her mind, let us test her constancy and by so doing try Naḷa's honesty. What do you say to my suggestion?

The gods indicate their approval.

Yama: Yes, you say? Good! Then let us start our journey.

Yama and the *digpālās* exit as the curtain is raised. The singers chant Śloka 19 in *madhyamāvathi raga.*

Śloka 19

With the departure of Nārada and Parvathan,
Indra descended to earth
Accompanied by the Gods of Fire, Water and Death.
And within a short time they reached the precincts of Kaṇḍinapūr.

(The singers chant Śloka 20 in the same *rāga*.)

Śloka 20

When all the four directions were reverberating with the sound of drums
Which augur the procession of kings,
Naḷa, who also had been invited,
Proceeded, confident of success.

(After the curtain is removed Naḷa enters from stage left as though riding a chariot. He indicates that he sees divine beings whereupon he gestures as though to pull the chariot to a halt. Indra and the other gods enter from stage right. Naḷa humbly bows and respectfully offers the gods a seat. Stage attendants bring stools for Yama, Agni and Varuṇa who sit stage right while Indra dances Pada 22 set in the same *rāga* and *campaṭa tāla*.)

Pada 22

The vine one sought got wound round one's feet:
We sought Naḷa and now he approaches.

Vīrāsena,
King of Niṣadha,
Who was a forest fire for the jungle of his enemies,
Is well known to us.
You must be his son?
You are Naḷa, are you not?

(Naḷa replies by dancing the first part of Pada 23 set in *saveri rāga* and *Eka tāla*.)

Pada 23

I prostrate myself before you, oh Gods!
You have guessed correctly.
I am Naḷa and I am at your service.

(Indra dances the next portion of Pada 22 in the original *rāga* and *tāla*. Naḷa salutes the Gods and bows low before them as they are introduced.)

Pada 22

This is the God of Death.
This is the God of Fire.
This is the God of Water.
And I am Indra.
Discarding the *kalpaka* tree[15] we have come to you to beg a favor.

(Naḷa dances Pada 23 in the *rāga* and *tāla* in which it was originally set.)

Pada 23

Almighty *devas*,
I hope you are not putting me to a test,
For I am but a child when compared to you
And you should not play tricks on me.
Lord of Thunder,
I am at your service.

(Indra continues Pada 22.)

Pada 22

Hearing talk of Damayantī's virtues both day and night
Gives us endless pleasure.
We wish to wed her.
And you must help us to achieve this desire.

(Naḷa quickly responds by dancing more of Pada 23.)

Pada 23

I too am a suitor for her hand.
Lord of the *devas*, I beg you have mercy.
I am not a suitable messenger.
I would be unable to meet her
Let alone speak with her, even if I tried.

(Indra continues Pada 22.)

Pada 22

Having once made a promise, it is unjust to break it.
Do not dishonor your noble family
Under the influence of your own infatuation.

(Naḷa concludes Pada 23.)

Pada 23

The city is crowded with people.
How can I hope to speak with her in private?
Do not be angry.
One can do only what is possible, no more.

(Indra completes Pada 22.)

Pada 22

Go and tell her this, "You must wed one of us."
To assist you in this mission we shall present you with a magic charm
Which shall make you invisible at will.
We shall await your return.

(Indra and Naḷa perform a short interpolated passage:

Indra: Go to Kaṇḍinapūr. You will encounter no difficulty in penetrating the harem. I shall whisper in your ear the charm called "Thiraskarini."

Indra does so and Naḷa responds as though he has learned the charm.

Nala: I shall inform Damayantī of your suit.

Nala bows before the gods and departs. The curtain is raised as the singers narrate the intervening incidents of the story in a *daṇḍakam*, or narrational passage of song unaccompanied by percussion instruments.)

Pada 1

Having agreed to deliver Indra's message,
Naḷa proceeds,
Leaving his retinue behind,
Impatient to feast his eyes on the glorious features of Damayantī.

Pada 2

Along the road to the palace,
Among the milling crowds of warriors accompanying their kings,
Among the wandering Brahmins,
He walked rapidly, often coming into violent contact with many.
But even when walking beside close acquaintances
They failed to recognize him
And the new experience sent a thrill of excitement through him.

(Damayantī and her maids enter from stage right conceilled by the curtain and she sits on a stool absorbed in thought. The *iṭekka* player joins the other musicians anticipating Damayantī's dances. The curtain is taken stage left in preparation for Naḷa's entrance thus revealing Damayantī to the spectators.)

Pada 3

Later, unnoticed by the guards,
Naḷa entered the maidens' quarters.

(Naḷa lifts the curtain in the middle as though to enter. The curtain is removed and Naḷa stands in awe of Damayantī during the remainder of Pada 3.)

At long last his eyes feated on Damayantī,
Whose beauty enthralled him,
From the tip of her delicate toes
To the top of her head of luxuriant, black hair.

Pada 4

Although her beauty intoxicated him,
Naḷa recalled that he had come as Indra's messenger
And to forget that would be a sin.
So with supreme effort he regained his self-control,
Discarded the magic charm
And stood before Damayantī and her chambermaids.

(Naḷa acts as the words suggest and Damayantī rises on seeing him. The singers chant Śloka 21 set in *bhairavi rāga.)*

Śloka 21

Although the person who stood before her
Resembled the image of her beloved lord
Which she had pieced together from hearsay and enthroned in her mind,
She inferred him to be a *deva*
Because he could appear at will.
This thought helped her to overcome her natural shyness.
The courtesy due an honored guest,
Surprise that he should have entered her well-guarded quarters,
And excitement in the presence of a male --
All these showed on her face when she slowly spoke thus:

(The singers perform Pada 24 in the same *rāga* and *campaṭa tāla* as Damayantī dances.)

Pada 24

Oh nobel one, was not your appearance auspicious?
Are you the God of Love or the Moon?
And what is the purpose of your visit?

(Naḷa dances the first part of Pada 25 in *kalyani rāga* and *campaṭa tāla.)*

Pada 25

Oh daughter of King Bhīma,
Know me as the messenger of the *devas*.
I bear some messages from Lord Indra.
Please give ear to them.

(Ignoring Naḷa's announcement, Damayantī responds with more of Pada 24 in the *rāga* and *tāla* in which it was originally set.)

Pada 24

Which family is ornamented by your birth?
What is your name?
I cannot believe that you are a mere messenger.
To me you resemble a king.

(Naḷa dances more of Pada 25 in its original *rāga* and *tāla*.)

Pada 25

When Indra is ill at ease,
Is it proper to ask the family and name of another person?
Indra, the Lord of the Worlds, has sent a message through me.
Listen to it.
Indra has discarded all the heavenly women
And unless he succeeds in gaining permission to serve you,
He is helpless to resist the onslaught of the God of Love.

The God of Fire is also suffering from heartaches
And devors firewood indiscriminately.
Even Swaha, his wife, is out of favor with him.
The God of Death will soon expire on your account.
And the God of Water too is unable to quench his passion.

(Damayantī dances more of Pada 24.)

Pada 24

How can the *devas* take this thoughtless action?
Is it so troublesome for them to grasp this simple point:
Being the daughter of a king,
I naturally desire to wed a king.

(Naḷa dances Pada 25.)

Pada 25

It is best that you wed one of the four suggested by Indra.
If you do so, you will drink nectar, always be gay, receive all the material things that you fancy, and live endlessly.

(Damayantī responds with the middle portion of Pada 24.)

Pada 24

Though you cannot see him, I have enshrined an image of my beloved within me.
When you, who resemble him, speak like this, it pains me intensely and life seems a burden.
It would be a great relief if you would stay here and speak more pleasantly.

(Repulsed by her suggestion, Naḷa dances the remaining portions of Pada 25.)

Pada 25

Damayantī, your frivolous attitude surprises me!
Is it because they have come begging at your door that you discard them to whom great respect is due?
Who is going to protect you if you insult the *devas*, I must know?

It is certain that you fail to honor the words of the four *devas* because you show contempt for their messenger.
I shall report this to them.
There is no doubt that if they send another messenger more suited to your taste, you will surely wed one of them.

(Damayantī replies to his rebuke with the remaining portion of Pada 24.)

Pada 24

The world houses many chaste women and I am one among them.
In my mind I have already chosen my lord.
If I change my mind now, that would be a sin.
Knowing all this as the *devas* must,
If the guardians of *dharma* themselves turn unjust, to whom can I look for help?
Because of your resemblance to my beloved, I am so candid.
I would not have said all this to another.
Reflect on this and report appropriately to them.

(Damayantī and Naḷa complete the scene with the following brief interpolated passage: She turns her face modestly away as he exhibits astonishment, affection, respect and adoration. Then recalling his magic charm, Naḷa transforms himself and leaves. Damayantī responds to his miraculous disappearance and makes her exit with her maids. The curtain is raised and the *iṭekka* drummer leaves the stage. As the singers chant Śloka 22 set in *mōhanam rāga*, Indra, Agni, Yama and Varuṇa enter and sit on stools placed on stage left.)

Śloka 22

Astonishment at her constancy,
Affection for her love,
Respect for her competency,
And admiration for her noble virtues --
All these Naḷa experienced.
By a superhuman effort of self-control
He somehow managed to leave her
And using his magic charm he returned and reported to the four *devas*.

(The curtain is removed. Naḷa enters from stage right and approaches Indra and the other *devas*. The singers perform Pada 26 in the same *rāga* and *muṛiyaṭanta tāla*. Naḷa greets the gods and dances.)

Pada 26

Lord of the *devas*, I prostrate myself before you.

I went to the fawn-eyed one,
But the result was fruitless; what more can I say?

I went to her without anyone seeing me
And I delivered your messages separately.
First I tried using agreeable words;
When they failed I described the advantages of wedding a *deva;*
Next I used threatening remarks portending the disastrous consequences of her actions.
This is the truth.

My threats failed to move her.
Only those who are fortunate are destined to enjoy heavenly bliss.
She has bestowed her heart on someone else.
And the only witnesses to her secret are the arrows of the God of Love.
She did not tell me his name.

I have done all I promised.
What more can a feeble creature such as I do?
Send another message and take her soon.
Undoubtedly women are fickle.
If you care to, you can change her mind by courting her yourselves and thus take her for your own.

(Indra continues to dance Pada 26 bringing the scene to a conclusion.)

Pada 26

Go to the *svayamvara* and strive to win her hand.
We are now friends, bound together by a common aim.
She has to wed one of us.
If she chooses another, trouble will surely befall both of them.
We will be there without a doubt.

Righteous King, your mind does not turn to the ways of sin.

(The *devas* each bless Naḷa and withdraw. Nala appears wrapt in thought, but then with hesitation he rouses himself, mimes calling his retinue, mounts his chariot and starts toward the city. The curtain is raised.

Ślokas 23 through 25 and Padas 27 through 30 are rarely performed today, most probably because they are incidental to the main action, Damayanti's selection of a husband. However, they are included here as Varryar arranged them.

During the chanting of Śloka 23 set in *natakuranji rāga*, two *dānavas*[16] enter the playing area, pay their obeisance to the musicians, musical instruments and the stage.)

Śloka 23

Thus dismissed by the *devas* who were pleased,
Naḷa was gratified and entered the palace assigned to him by the King of Vidarbha.
When the semi-divine beings and kings of the seven isles were discovered
  to have assembled there,
The *rākṣasas*[17] spoke to the *asuras:*

(The curtain is withdrawn revealing the two *dānavas* sitting on the stage floor engaged in a game of dice. Three *rākṣasas* enter from stage left and dance Pada 27 in the same *rāga* and *ataṇṭa tāla*.)

Pada 27

Asuras, strong as you are, why are you lacking in action?
In attaining the third *puruṣāratha*,[18] the people of the fourteen worlds are
  much exercised.

Let us stop our games -- our dice and chess play.
Are the *rākṣasas* pulling our legs, or is what they say true?

However beautiful that earthly damsel may be,
It is interesting that beings in all the three worlds have fallen in love with her.

(The *rākṣasas* conclude the Pada.)

Pada 27

There is logic in the inference that Lakṣmī,
Tired of Viṣṇu, her passion-free spouse who often falls into meditation,
Died (How can people with qualities adore those without them?)
And is reborn again on earth.

We must kill kings,
Dupe the *devas*,
Eat the *nāgas*,
And kidnap the maiden
While the weak look on longingly.
Let us go there,
For if we remain here idling,
It would surely be demeaning.

(The curtain is held up to conceal the exit of the demons and the entrance of the *kinnaras* -- Indra, Nala, Agni, Yama and Varuṇa -- who stand in a line on one side of the stage. All are dressed exactly alike and wear exactly the same make-up. The singers chant Śloka 24 in *sarangam rāga.)*

Śloka 24

And so the *rākṣasas* and *dānavas*,
With earth-rending cries,
Spoke to the semi-divine beings assembled in Kuṇḍinapūr.

(The curtain is removed revealing the demons who dance in unison to Pada 28 set in the same *rāga* and *campaṭa tāla*.)

Pada 28

We do not accede to your wishes!

The sky and the earth are full of you.
Although our words are in your best interest,
Albeit you may find them unpalatable,
You do not heed them.

We complained about our lack of conjugal bliss to Brahmā-*deva*
Who was pleased by our request
And said he would send the Goddess of Love herself to us.

When this is the case, why do you come and sit here staring?
If you only come to enjoy looking at her, you are excused.
But move aside now!
Do not hope to win her.

(The demons continue to act out Śloka 25 set in *bhairavi rāga*.)

Śloka 25

When the demons fell to quarreling,
Saying such things as,
"She is my wife!"
"No, she is my queen!"
"My love!"
"Mine!!!!"
"All of you are fools!"

(The curtain is held up to conceal the exit of all the characters and the entrance of Sarasvatī, King Bhīma and Kanchuki, his chamberlain, as the singers complete the Śloka.)

Sarasvatī, who was sent by Lord Viṣṇu
In answer to the prayers of the perplexed King Bhīma,
Spoke thus:

(The curtain is removed and Sarasvatī dances Pada 29 in the same *rāga* and *campaṭa tāla.*)

Pada 29

King Bhīma, do not fret.
Viṣṇu has sent me here to introduce your daughter to this well-adorned audience.
All are under the influence of the God of Love.
So all the inhabitants of the worlds have assembled here.

With Viṣṇu's blessing I can inform your daughter of the pertinent facts concerning everyone.

Prepare all the things needed for the ceremony.
The auspicious hour is fast approaching.

(Bhīma indicates to Kanchuki that he should bring Damayantī to him at once, then he dances Pada 30 set in *saveri rāga, campaṭa tāla.*)

Pada 30

My fears have evaporated.
All is well!
Now I know that I am fortunate indeed.

For if you pray to Viṣṇu, you are bound to achieve success in everything.
Hindrances disappear and you are saved from dishonor.

I prostrate myself before your saffron feet,
You who have come here at the request of Lord Viṣṇu.
Oh remover of sorrows,
Describe the qualities of those assembled here.
I have complete faith in your competency.

(Damayantī and her maids enter with Kanchuki. Damayantī goes to her father's side as he continues to dance the remainder of the Pada.)

Darling daughter, here is a companion for you.
See.
Know the people assembled here with her help,
And garland the one of your choice.

(The curtain is held up to shield the *kinnaras* from the spectators as they take their places on the five stools set in a row on stage left. King Bhīma stands near the *kinnaras*, the demons stand behind them and Sarasvatī and Damayantī occupy center stage. While these arrangements are made, the singers chant Śloka 26 set in *toṭi rāga.)*

Sloka 26

Pleased by her father's words,
Accompanied by ladies appointed by her mother,
To the sound of various musical instruments,
After having taken an auspicious bath,
Dressed in new cloths and carried in a palanquin,
Damayantī was addressed by Sarasvatī thus:

(The curtain is removed and Sarasvatī dances the first part of Pada 31 set in the same *raga* and *campaṭa tāla.)*

Pada 31

Good-natured one, hear me.
You with a face like the moon,
Garland one of these assembled here.

(Sarasvatī gives Damayantī a garland of flowers brought by an attendant. At Sarasvatī's following suggestions Damayantī reacts negatively by glancing in the opposite direction. The subjects of her rebuke respond appropriately.)

Pada 31

Choose one from among the *devas* whom all praise.
Or select one from among the *asuras* who have subdued the world by their prowess.

Here are the demi-gods from which you may desire to choose.
And if your fancy tends that way,
Here are the kings of various lands.

Here is the King of Avanthi.
Here is the Kalinga king.
This is the famous Rituparna.
There sits the noble King of Niṣadha.

(At the mention of Naḷa, Damayantī shows interest, pleasure and shyness.)

And by his side, in the same gvise, sit
Indra, Varuṇa, Agni, and Yama.

(Damayantī dances the final part of Pada 31.)

Pada 31

Even in my dreams I have not thought ill of the *digpālas*.
Therefore, they have no occasion to deceive me.
Even if I err, should the sorrow-removers of the world play this kind if game?
Oh God, what is there for me to do?
Even from my youth I knew Naḷa was to be my husband.
If what I say is true,
Let the curtain that hides him from me be removed!
If by mind, body and words I know of none as my lord, save Naḷa,
May it please the *devas* to help me distinguish him from the others.
Would the *devas* ever bring sorrow to their devotees?
What shall I do now when my mind is being consumed as fuel by fire?

(The singers cant Śloka 27 set in *puraniva rāga*.)[19]

Śloka 27

Thereafter, as prayed for by Damayantī,
The *devas* wondrously revealed their orthodox signs:

(The *kinnaras* stand and all but Naḷa assume the *vara-abhaya mudrā*.)[20]

Then Damayanti garlanded Naḷa.

(Damayantī moves to Nala and garlands him. Then they join hands, a gesture of union commonly used in wedding ceremonies to symbolize the binding of the newly-weds.)

And the *devas*, who were pleased, spoke thus:

(The singers perform Pada 32 in the same *rāga* and *campaṭa tāla* as Indra dances.)

Pada 32

With pleasure I bless you both,
Oranments of the families of Vidarbha and Niṣadha.

Know that I am not disheartened, Naḷa,
You whose heart is pure.
In the *yajna* that you perform,
I shall accept the offering personally.
And finally you shall enter the world of Śiva.

(Nala and Damayantī bow before Indra who raises his hands above their heads signifying his blessing. Agni dances more of Pada 32.)

Pada 32

Though Damayantī, for whom I wished, married you,
Not only have I no hard feelings but I am positively glad.
In matters of cooking and consuming I shall be at your service.
What you cook shall equal nectar in quality.

(Agni also blesses Naḷa and Damayantī. Yama continues Pada 32.)

Pada 32

I came to help you win Damayantī.
I am gratified and shall also bless you with these boons:
Even in adversity your mind will turn away from sinful ways.
And you will easily learn the art of using weapons.

(Yama blesses Naḷa and Damayantī. Varuṇa steps forward and dances more of Pada 32.)

Pada 32

Live happily with Bhaimi!
I present you two more boons:
Even faded flowers of trees and plants will become as fresh as ever,
  merely by your touch.
For you, even in the desert, there will be as much water as you want.

(Varuṇa blesses the happy couple and Sarasvatī dances the final part of Pada 32.)

Pada 32

To you and your wife and to all those who think of you,
The following boons will I bestow:
Literary genius of a high order,
With an understanding of deep meanings.
Rhythm will be as sweet nectar to the ear, easy and natural.
Words with complex meanings, rhymes, metaphors, similes, figures of speech,
All shall easily flow from your pen.

(The stage attendants scatter flower petals over the heads of the happy couple as the second singer blows the conch shell proclaiming the auspiciousness of the occasion. Naḷa and Damayantī bow to the *devas*, who bless them once more. Then as the singers chant Śloka 28 in the same *rāga*, the actors retire from the playing area.)

Śloka 28

Having spoken thus,
The *devas* with Sarasvatī disappeared and ascended into heaven.
Vidarbha's king led his daughter and Naḷa to his palace
  which reverberated with the sound of musical instruments.

(the two leading dancers of the company perform the final dance set either in *bhupala rāga* or in *paranira rāga* and a rhythm typically used for such occasions. Finally the dancers join their hands in a *namaskara* above their heads and then slowly lower them to chest level and make deep bows to the spectators as the first night of the performance comes to a close).

FOOTNOTES

1. In the heroic poem *Niṣadhēēya Caritam* by Srī Harsha, the great Sanskrit poet, Damayantī is unnerved by it!

2. It is true that Vāryyar had a model to copy in Srī Harsha's poem *Niṣadhēēas Charitam*, but what he has advisedly omitted to borrow and what he has added as his own, are eloquent tributes to his genius. For instance, Harsha's swan paints Naḷa as a philanderer while Vāryyar's swan shakes her love for Naḷa to fix it!

3. In one of his padas there is an oblique slap at social snobbery, in another a reference to hedonistic (*charaka*) philosophy.

4. Nosy parkers, superstitious fellows and Don Juans.

5. The other two are Kottarathil Sankunny and K. C. Kesava Pillai.

6. The *rāga* which traditionally begins all Kathakaḷi *āṭṭakathas*.

7. Traditionally the introductory dance (*pur̲appātu*) may only be performed by a *pacca* character, such as Naḷa, or by a *minukku* character, such as Damayantī, and unlike many of the other dances in an *āṭṭakatha*, *abhinaya* or acting is not used to express the sentiments.

8. Ordinarily this *rāga* is used for grave or important matters, but here it suggests the Swan's justifiable pride and sense of superiority over mortals.

9. The *rāga* reveals Damayantī's deep sense of frustration caused by her separation from Naḷa. It is said to be liked by serpents (*nāgas*) from which its name is derived. Today the *rāga* is rather poorly executed and may even be incorrectly rendered.

10. "Step" or "gait" probably derived from the Sanskrit word *cārī* mentioned in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

11. Curiously Vāryyar has chosen *āhiri rāga*. Today the *rāga* suggests quite different sentiments from those implied by the verses. In Tamil Nadu, for example, the *rāga* is best suited for arousing pathos or the *bhakti* aspects of pathos and is rarely sung at home in the morning for fear that those who hear it will not get their daily meal. The Kathakaḷi artists use it for sentiments of rage (*raudra*). Nowadays the singers substitute *erikkila kamodari rāga* for *āhiri rāga*, although it too is not entirely suited to the sentiments expressed in the verses.

12. Today some actors who dance the role of the Swan elongate the action by drawing a picture of Naḷa on an imaginary lotus leaf which they give to Damayantī. Then they draw a picture of Damayantī which they indicate they intend to give to Naḷa. Orthodox dancers find this touch or realism inappropriate to the classical pattern of dance; however, there is some precedence in the exchange of love tokens in classical Sanskrit dramas, such as *Abhijnānaśakuntalam* and in *Ascarya Cudamani*.

13. Indra's question concerning the identity of the sage, presumably Parvathan, who does not actually need to appear in the scene, is never answered by Nārada. Perhaps the original manuscript is corrupt at this point.

14. Superlative *tiranōkkus* are made by demons, such as Rāvaṇa, and animals, such as Hanumān, often taking more than forty-five minutes to complete. However, those made by divinities, such as Yama, are considerably shorter and designed to accent *adbhuta*, the *rasa* of wonderment.

15. The magic tree of heaven which grants whatever one desires.

16. *Asuras*, or demons, who obtained their power by performing penances or by receiving boons granted by a god or powerful sage.

17. Demons who were born wicked.

18. *Kamam*, one of the four goals of Hindu life, dictates that a man should take a bride, equal to his virtues and station in life. The other goals are *dharmam*, *artham* and *moksham*.

19. The *rāga* is used for auspicious occasions and normally ends all *āṭṭakathas*.

20. A combination of hand gestures commonly depicted in paintings and sculptures of Hindu dieties.

Martha Bush Ashton

THE RITUALS OF YAKṢAGĀNA BAḌAGATIṬṬU BAYALĀṬA

Yakṣagāna Baḍagatiṭṭu Bayalāṭa[1] is one of several forms of dance and dance-drama performed mainly in and around the tropical coastal district of South Kanara, Mysore State, South India. This ritualized folk-art, enacted by an all-male caste, is a spectacle of vividly-colored and swirling costumes, lively and intricate dance steps, and forceful and descriptive gestures. The staccato and lilting sounds of its music carry for miles, luring many villagers to a night of entertainment. This northern style (*baḍagatiṭṭu*) of Yakṣagāna is simply staged in a casual atmosphere: in an open area a small rectangular plot of ground is set off by decorated bamboo poles at each corner and roofed with palm-frond mats. Members of the audience sit (and sometimes sleep) on the ground on three sides of the performance area and come and go as they please, often visiting the nearby vendors' stands for refreshments. The actor-dancers dress for the performance in an area also demarcated by bamboo poles and walled and floored with mats.

At the request of wealthy patrons who provide the financial support, Yakṣagāna troupes travel from village to village re-enacting stories based on ancient Hindu epics and legends. The stories are told through the media of music, dance, costume and make-up, and impromptu dialogue (in the Kannada language).

Like most Indian dance-dramas, Yakṣagāna Baḍagatiṭṭu Bayalāṭa performances include both preliminary and concluding rituals. This tradition has no doubt been inspired and influenced by the *Nāṭya Śāstra*, an ancient Hindu treatise (200 B.C. to 200 A.D.) on music, dance and dramaturgy which dictates, among other things, all the rituals that should be observed before the building of a performance area, and those that should be observed before and after each performance.

All songs, poetry and prose in the Yakṣagāna Baḍagatiṭṭu Bayalāṭa rituals, with the exception of two items, are found in a work entitled *Yakṣagāna Sabhālakṣana mattu Prasaṅgapīṭhike* (Praises of the Audience [including the gods] and the Introduction to the Main Event [the Story]), the date of which is unknown.[2]

There are no documents describing the functions of the Yakṣagāna rituals; however, from my own observation the primary function seems to be to praise the gods and in this way remind the people of all the gods' aspects and their relationships to mankind: protection for the devoted and destruction for the wicked. Some other functions might be to inform the audience of the progressive stages of the performance and to describe the different elements of the performance such as the musicians, the musical instruments, the dance, the troupe and the audience. From the standpoint of time, possibly the rituals were designed to entertain those who lived nearby until those who lived farther away could reach the performance area.

Before the Main Event (*prasaṅga*)

Announcement to the Patron of the Troupe's Arrival

The preliminaries begin in the morning when the *saṅgītagāra*,[3] *wattu maddaḷegāra*,[4] and *śrutigāra*[5] of the troupe arrive at the patron's house. The *saṅgītagāra* sings a devotional song. Although *Yakṣagāna Sabhālakṣaṇa mattu Prasaṅgapīṭhike* contains devotional songs for this purpose to Gaṇapati, Viṣṇu, Siva, Durgā, Rāma (a form of Viṣṇu), Brahmā, and Hanumanta, nowadays the one song performed is usually dedicated to Goddess Mūkāmbika. It is usually sung in *rāga mōhana ādi tāḷa:*

Srī Mūkāmbika, one who has the walk of an elephant,
One whose feet are worshipped by Indra,
Beautiful lady with the golden color and delicate body,
You who are fond of the name of Rāma,[6]
You have great valor.

You who have a beautiful neck like the conch,
You who have the lotus-heart of the yogis as your home,
You who have all the powers,
You whose feet are worshipped by all Gods,
Auspicious one who is always keeping yourself happy,
Your body is perfumed with the scent of sandal paste
    that has been applied by the great group of poets,
You are one who is worshipped by rishis like Sānanda,
You are one who walks slowly like the elephant.

You are Śaṅkara's wife, Śaṅkari,
You are ready to serve your best devotees.
You are decorated with a ruby.
You are terrible to the demons.
You are *onkāri* personified, *onkāri*.
You who have the conch and the discus in your hands,
    are the protector of the world.

Your fame is praised by the Vēdas.
Lotus-eyed one who has red lips as if marked
    by *kuṁkuma*, you are responsible for the creation,
    protection and destruction.
You are full of kindness, destroyer of the race of Diti.
One who has a serpent-like braid, face like a beautiful moon,
Uplifter of the whole world, you have teeth like the jasmine bud.
You are very dignified, and courageous, lotus-eyed one.
Protect us, Hiriyādka Purēsvari.[7]

The singing of this song signifies to the patron that the troupe has arrived and that they will perform. The patron gives betel leaf and areca nut[8] to the *saṅgītagāra* as a token that he will pay for the performance the following morning when the *prasaṅga* has been completed. The *saṅgītagāra, wattu maddaḷegāra,* and *śrutigāra* now rejoin the rest of the troupe, have breakfast, and sleep until eveing.

Announcement of the Performance (*cauka abbara*)

In the evening, the performers arise from their sleep and have their evening meal. When this meal is finished, usually about 6:30 P.M., the *maddaḷegāra* and the *caṇḍegāra*[9] go to a place just outside the dressing room (*cauka*) and play a series of special drum sounds and rhythms called the *cauka abbara.* The little clowns (*koḍaṅgis*) join in with sounds like "lē, lē, lē, lē, kē, hō!"[10] and then so quickly inside the dressing room to put on their black pajamas, green jackets, and red turbans.

During the *cauka abbara*, the head staff member prepares the image of the elephant-faced god Gaṇapati, which is kept at the closed end of the *cauka*, for ceremonial worship (*pūjā*). He decorates the god with areca palm flowers, jasmine, or any other flowers that are in season. Yakṣagāna Baḍagatiṭṭu Bayalāṭa headgears and ornaments are placed in the upturned lid of a straw basket in front of the deity. On a small tray also placed before the god, he puts coconuts, flowers and bananas. As the head staff member makes ready for the *pūjā*, other staff members unpack ornaments and crowns and hang them on the horizontal poles of the *cauka.* Two staff members put cotton rope wicks into two shovel-shaped lamps, fill the lamps with coconut oil, and light them from the lamp which is burning before the deity.

During this time the troupe members take their places according to the traditional arrangement as shown on the following page.

THE IMAGE[11]

bhāgavata and *maddaḷegāra*

eraḍaneya vēśa (2nd Actor)[12]

rākṣasa and/or *rākṣasi* (Demon or Demoness)

puruṣa[13] *vēśa* (Second to the *eraḍaneya vēśa*)

waṅdaneya muṇḍāsu (Actor of most importance who wears the *muṇḍāsu* headdress)

mukhya strīvēśa (Main female character)

eraḍaneya muṇḍāsu (Actor of second importance who wears the *muṇḍāsu*)

mūraneya vēśa (3rd Actor)

sakhi strīvēśa (2nd female character; confidante to the queen or princess)

mūraneya strīvēśa (3rd female character)

bālagōpālas (Young dancers representing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma)

hāsyagāra (the Clown)

and

kōḍaṅgis (Young Clowns)

After the *cauka abhara*, the *maddaḷegāra* and the *caṇḍegāra* join the *bhāgavata* in the *cauka* for the opening prayers to Lord Gaṇapati, who is always worshipped before other deities because he is thought to remove difficulties and permit a show to succeed. The *pūjā* begins when coconuts are split and libation is offered to the god. Then the coconuts are returned to the tray and the ritual of waving the sacred flame (*ārati*) is performed. In an ornamental vessel especially designed for *ārati*, or in a flat metal plate, oil-soaked wicks are lit and waved in a clockwise motion before the god. As the flame is waved, the *bhāgavata* sings a particular song in praise of Gaṇapati. *Bhāgavatas* of all troupes sing this particular song for the beginning *pūjā* of every performance. It is generally sung in *rāga ghaṅṭārava*[14] *tripuḍe tāḷa*.

> To Gaṇapa[15] who has the face of the elephant,
> To the beautiful one who is worshipped in the three worlds,
> Let us wave *ārati*.

To Gaṇapa who has the face of the elephant,
To one who relishes the best beaten rice, coconut,
    Bengal gram, a sweet ball made of gingely,[16] sugar
    cane, and to one who dances with silver bells tied
    at his waist,
Wave *ārati* to the big-bellied Gaṇapati.

To the elephant-faced one,
To one who accepts trophies from the Gods,
To one who burns like the forest fire,
To one who fulfills the desires of those who think about him,
Wave *arati*.

To the elephant-faced one,
To the one who holds the axe, the tope,
    and the elephant goad in his hands,
To one who delights in protecting the devotees,
To the son of one who has decorated himself with snakes,
Wave *ārati*.
Elephant-faced one.

After the *pūjā*, the flaming *ārati* vessel is passed around to all who are in the dressing room. Each person passes his right hand, palm down, in a clockwise circle over the flame, then touches it to his forehead, and sometimes to the eyes and/or heart. A small portion of a confection, such as a mixture of brown sugar and flattened cooked rice, which has been specially prepared and offered to the god, is then given to each person in the *cauka*. This confection is called *prasādaṁ*.[17]

After this ceremony, the *saṅgītagāra*, the *wattu maddaḷegāra*, the *caṇḍegāra*, the *śrutigāra*, and the little clowns, with the two staff members in the lead carrying the lighted shovel-shaped lamps, go in procession to the *raṅgasthaḷa* (that specific area in which the performers enact the drama).

During the procession, the small cymbals (*tāḷa*), *maddaḷe*, and *caṇḍe* play special rhythms while the little clowns say:

> Listen, one whose uproar has spread
>   like the smell of musk,
> One who is majestic as the Ocean,
> One who has elegance and grace.[18]

As the musicians take their places, the oil-lamps are secured on the left and right sides of the *raṅgasthaḷa*.

The *saṅgītagāra*, *wattu maddaḷegāra*, and *caṇḍegāra* all tune to the *śruti* (the harmonium's constant sounding note) and now perform a special series of sounds and rhythms known as the *abbarabaḍtige* to inform the listeners that the performance is about to begin.

The *kōḍaṅgis*' Dances

The *saṅgītagāra* next sings two songs in praise of Gaṇapati, the elephant-faced god, and a song in praise of Gaṇapati's mother, Mūkāmba, to which the *kōḍaṅgis* dance. According to the direction in *Yakṣagāna Sabhālakṣaṇa mattu Prasaṅgapīṭhike*, the following song is usually sung in *rāga nāṭi jhampe tāḷa*. For this song and all songs illustrated henceforth, the name of the *rāga* and *tāḷa* is listed immediately above the song.

(*rāga nāti jhampe tāḷa*)

With happiness I am always praising you, Vighnēśvara,
Lord of obstacles, Vighnēśvara, Lord of all obstacles of Madawūra.
God, Lord of this universe, with happiness [praise] to you.
You are God himself.
You are a lover of the essence of the Vēdas.
You have divine lotus-feet that are worshipped by Indra.
You are the son of Girijā.
You have the radiance of crores of suns.

(*rāga nāṭi rūpaka tāḷa*)

You are elephant-faced, an ocean of kindness,
one who gives salvation.
Hey! It is beyond my ability to praise your powers.
Even Mahāsēṣa, the serpent who has supported this
earth cannot praise you, the worthy son of
Īśvara.
You are the personification of all the Śāstras,
You are a strange lord of obstacles of Madawūra.
With happiness [I praise you].

(*rāga ghaṅṭārava tripuḍe tāḷa* [fast speed])

Śrī Mūkāmba, I have complete faith in your two
lotus feet.
Śrī Mūkāmba, you are the one who forever grants
boons according to my request.
You are very clever at playing your part in
the world.
Srī Mūkāmba, can anyone gauge your powers?
Mother Mūkāmba, you are the only supporter of
those who worship you in secret.

(*rāga ghaṅṭārava aṣṭa tāḷa*)

You are the auspicious wife of Siva, worshipped by
all the Gods.
Śrī Mūkāmba, better half of Siva, please protect
me forever.

The *saṅgītagāra* continues by chanting Sanskrit poetry honoring the audience and the musical instruments used in the performance. There are two ways in which the *saṅgītagāra* might execute Sanskrit poetry: he might chant it in a monotone and then end it in a modulation of a *rāga*; or he might sing the poem in several different tones, repeating these tones in different patterns, and then ending the poem in a modulation of a *rāga*. Either way, the poem is not accompanied by the small cymbals or the drums; therefore, the singer can render the poem in any rhythm and at any speed he wishes.

(*śārdūlavikrīḍitaṁ* [Sanskrit poetic meter])

I salute the audience that is supposed to be very sacred
 and respected by all;
That is always very generous;
That is always going along the good path;
That is virtuous;
That is capable of protecting truth by destroying
 all the sins;
That is the home of the Vēdas, Brahmā, Vyāsa and Mahēsa,
That has been looking beautiful with the Vidyādharas,[19]
 exactly like the orb of the moon on earth with all
 its glamor.

The *saṅgītagāra* then sings two songs in praise of Rāma to which the *kōḍaṅgis* also dance.

(*rāga tōḍi tripuḍe tāḷa*)

You are only seen by the Vēdas and Sāstras.
You are known only to the Śāstras, eternal,
 lotus-eyed one with the bird as your vehicle.
One who delights in the music of the Gandharvas,
 Bhṛgu, Vasiṣṭha, Vālmīki and the brahmins
 have blessed you.

(*rāga tōḍi aṣṭa tāḷa*)

Raghurāma, who is full of kindness and virtue!
I praise you.
Son of Daśaratha, destroyer of the demons,
One who is praised by Śiva, the wearer of the
 moon and one who has granted boons to Guha[20]
Praise to Srī Raghurāma.

After this song, the *kōḍaṅgis* salute the audience by putting their hands in prayer-like positions. Then they return to the *cauka*. On occasion, they will re-enter later with the *bālagōpālas* and practice what they have learned of the *bālagōpālas*' dances.

The *saṅgītagāra* now performs a long series of poetry and prose concerned with deities and various aspects of Yakṣagāna Baḍagatiṭṭu Bayalāṭa. As no accompaniment is needed except the *śruti*, the *wattu maddaḷegāra* and the *caṇḍegāra* leave the *raṅgasthaḷa*.

The first in the series of the *saṅgītagāra*'s renditions is a poem in praise of Lord Kṛṣṇa written in *parivardhinī*, a Kannada poetic meter. He sings the Kannada poetry in *rāgas* chosen by himself for their appropriateness to express the content of the poem.

(For all subsequent poems, the meter is listed immediately above each poem.)

Poetry in Praise of Lord Kṛṣṇa

(*parivardhinī* [Kannada poetic meter])

While the whole universe is in your stomach
Goddess of wealth, Lakṣmi, does not even know your feet.
You are the wearer of the amulet that protects other
wearers from the evil eye.
Narahari, the sky is your navel.
Viṭṭhala, lord of Rukmiṇi, who has a long shining dark
black braid.
A cowherd boy always in the company of other cowherd boys,
In your childhood you played with the cowherd boys.
The sky is your navel.
There is no one equal to you in virtue.
Famous in the world, praised by the *munis*,
Great Vīranārāyaṇa of Gaduga,[21]
The sky is your navel.

Prose and Poetry in Praise of the Audience

Next in the series is a passage in prose (*vacana*) which the *saṅgītagāra* renders either in a monotone or in conversational style. Throughout these recitations, the *saṅgītagāra* has an excellent opportunity to exhibit the qualities of his voice without the sometimes overpowering accompaniment of the *tāḷa* and the drums.

(*vacana* [prose])

> After saluting the eight Gods of the eight directions like this and sitting like this in the audience, if you ask whether God is first or the king is first, I am saying that God comes first. In that case, who among the Gods comes first? Bhūdēva [God of earth -- a *brahmaṇa*] comes first. So this audience full of *brahmaṇas* is the God of the earth.

(*śārdūlavikrīditaṁ* [Sanskrit poetic meter])

Audience that is virtuous and of good character,
Audience that is radiant with very good conduct,
Audience that is famous for establishing the good *dharma*,
This audience is famous for great heroes.
This audience is complete with Vēdas and Śāstras.
This audience has been decorated by the radiant princes
(or this audience is shining with the brilliance of the moon).
This audience has been made beautiful by the music.
This audience is filled with poets.
This audience is supposed to be the kingdom's wealth.

(*ślōka* [Sanskrit poetic meter])

Salutations to the audience that is the heavenly tree.[22]
You have the Ṛg Vēda as a root.
You have the Sāma Vēda as the branches.
The six philosophies are the white flowers.
The philosophical knowledge gained is the fruit of the tree.[23]

(*vacana* [prose])

It was like this in Amarāvati, the capital of Indra's kingdom, when Indra, the Sun to the enemy's darkness, was holding court, as Lord to all his subordinates who were decorating his court.

(*mahāsragdharā* [Sanskrit poetic meter])

The lord of the audience [Indra, king or patron] has great thoughts,
and is well-versed in all languages.
He is one who is grateful; one who knows the art of appreciation.
The lord of the audience is courageous, has great valor, is one
of sweet words, one of good reputation and is always in the
company of the lady called Fame!
One who has the beauty of Smara [Manmatha]; one who has given
up anger;
One who has pure character; one who is very kind;
Protect those who have sought his help.
He is like the moon who gives pleasure to the scholars who are
like the water lilies.
Lord of the audience.

(*vacana* [prose])

You have just heard the main qualities of the audience. There are kings and ministers who are worthy of the nature and cleverness attributed to the audience. Do you know how they should be?

(*ślōka* [Sanskrit poetic meter])

The kings should be like the earth;
The ministers should be like the heavenly tree.
The retinue should be like the sacred cow.
The subjects should be like the king in character.

(*vacana* [prose])

What kind of scholars should be in the audience previously described?

(*ślōka*)

Those who are well-read, poets, great brahmins, scholars,
musicians, jesters, historians, writers of epics.

(*vacana*)

These are the seven features of the audience. When the audience is complete with these seven features then in what way should the scholars show themselves?

Poetry Describing the Placement of Performers on Stage

(*ślōka*)

On the left there must be the player of the *mṛdaṅgaṁ* [*maddaḷe*].
On the right there must be the player of the *taḷa*.
In the middle, the *bhāgavata*,
On his side, those who praise the King,
In the front those who dance,
To the left, the jester,
Then the stage will be complete with the dance.

Poetry and Prose Describing the Stage

(*vacana*)

The area of the performing area must be like this:

(*ślōka*)

Five *hastas* length, ten *hastas* height.[24]
Like a crescent moon is the performance area.

Poetry and Prose Describing the *bhāgavata*

(*vacana*)

These are the main qualities of the *bhāgavata* who stands on the stage.

(*ślōka*)

Bha signifies the devotee of God;
Ga means one without pride;
Va signifies one who is well-versed in sentences;
Ta signifies good judgment.
The qualities of the *bhāgavata* are over.
The *bhāgavata* should be able to sing both day and
night with his face either to the east or to the
north.
In the night he can face the west, but never
to the south.[25]
The stage for dance is set in five *daṇḍas*.[26]
In the middle of this kind of audience,
think of Hari.

In the stillness of the night, the *saṅgītagāra* loudly and clearly continues singing the praises of the gods and descriptions of the different aspects of the dance-drama.

Poetry and Prose Mentioning Those Whom the *bhāgavata* Should Praise

(*vacana*)

To whom should the *bhāgavata* sing praises in song?

(*ślōka*)

Vāṇī [Sarasvatī], Gaṇapati, Gaurī, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Mahēśvara.
He must sing about the sky, the earth, Lakṣmī, Gurū, Visvāmitra,
Vasiṣṭha, Śuka, Kaṇva, Parāśara, Agastya, Gautama, and all
the divine rishis.

Poetry Describing the Instruments and the Troupe

(*ślōka*)

Mṛ stands for Mahālakṣmi;
Da stands for Shāradāmbikā [Sarasvatī];
Ga stands for Pārvatī Dēvī.

(*ślōka*)

The *tāḷa* is eight inches.[27]
The *taṁbūra* is six inches.
The *khagavastu* is two inches.[28]
The *maddaḷe* is twelve inches.
There are six features of the troupe:
dancers, actors, jester, *maddaḷe*,
śruti, and *bhāgavata*.

Poetry and Prose Describing the Dance

(*ślōka*)

Your eyes should always be following your hands.
Your emotions should be where your mind is.
These are the characteristics of the dance.

(*vacana*)

These are the characteristics of the dance: like this to the accompaniment of the *tāḷa*, the troupe, *śruti*, and the *gajje*, Tuṁbura and Nārada were playing while Hara [Śiva] was dancing in front of Andhakāsura (Darkness personified); like Hari [Kṛṣṇa] was dancing on the hood of the Kālīya serpent [the serpent that was spreading poison which Kṛṣṇa defeated]; like this Rambhe, Urvaśi, Mēnaka, and Tilōttama [the four heavenly dancers] were dancing in the court of Devēndra. I am incapable of explaining all the technicalities of the dance.... You must listen to me, even though there may be mistakes, some half-sentences, and words sounding like child's talk, I am doing nothing but praising Lakṣminārāyaṇa [Viṣṇu]. It is like children playing in front of their mother, disciples kneeling down before the God Vināyaka [Gaṇapati]. Victory to this audience and to the Sabhāpati[29] who are equal to the sacred cow and the heavenly tree. They are like the sun to the lotus and they are like the beauty of Manmatha. Victory!

As the *saṅgītagāra* continues with the preliminaries, the actor-dancers are busy readying themselves for the performance. Before putting on their bells, they might hold them in their hands and facing the image extend the bells toward it; they might touch the bells to their eyes and to their heart and/or forehead; if they are not brahmins, they might ask brahmins to bless their bells. Each in his own way prays that he will do his best in the performance. Often when actors take the crowns either from the poles or from the straw lid in front of the deity and place them on their heads, they offer another silent prayer.

Songs and Poetry Concerning the Deities

(*ślōka*)

The human body is difficult to possess and the body is temporal.
Even then it is very difficult to reach Vaikuṇṭha [the heavenly
abode of Viṣṇu].
The music and dance pertaining to Viṣṇu is specifically very great.
All the brahmins who have attained realization should do their
daily rituals without faltering.
Never delay because our life time is very short.
Day by day our life span is shortened.
We must sing the praise of Hari because Yama [God of Death] is
not kind to us.

During this *ślōka* the drummers return to their places at the *raṅgasthaḷa* and tune the drums in preparation for the songs to follow.

(*rāga kalyāṇa ēka tāḷa*)

Rāmabhadra, Gōvinda, Praise!
Ramaṇa, Gōvinda, Acyuta, Ananta, Gōvinda, Praise!
Rāmakṛṣṇa, Gōvinda.

(*ślōka*)

With a face like the moon, eyes like the lotus petal
and radiance of crores of suns, this audience
deserved the salutation.

(*rāga kalyāṇi ēka tāḷa*)

Rāma, Rāghuva, Gōvinda, Praise!
Ramaṇa, Gōvinda, Acyuta, Ananta, Praise!
Rāmakṛṣṇa, Gōvinda.

(*śārdūlavikrīditaṁ*)

First, born in the womb of Dēvaki, grew in the house of Gōpi,
destroyed the life of Pūtani, then lifted the mountain
Gōvardhana, killed Kaṁsa, eradicated the Kauravas, he is
the protector of the sons of Kunti.
This is the story for the life-giving play of Kṛṣṇa found in
the *Purāṇa* called *Bhāgavata*.

Songs for *bālagōpālas*' Dances Interspersed with Poetry in Praise of the Deities

By the time this poem is finished, the *bālagōpālas* are near the entrance to the *raṅgasthaḷa*. The curtain, about six feet wide and five feet high, is held at each top corner by two stage-hands so that it hangs vertically about one foot above the ground at the entrance (left of the *saṅgītagāra*). When the dancers come to the *raṅgasthaḷa*, all but the tops of their headdresses and their feet are concealed from the audience. Before each dancer makes his first entrance in a role, he pays respect to the *tāḷa*, the *maddaḷe* and the *bhāgavata* (or *saṅgītagāra*). He touches the *tāḷa* with his right had and then places his hand over his heart, eyes and/or forehead; then he touches the *maddaḷe* and the feet of the *bhāgavata* (or *saṅgītagāra*) in the same way. He demonstrates his respect for the audience by touching the ground with his right hand in the same manner.

The *bālagōpālas*, representing Lords Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in their youth, quickly enter the stage from behind the curtain and dance to the following songs.

(*rāga kalyāṇi ēka tāḷa*)

Praise Ramaṇa, Mukunda, Nārāyaṇa, Kēsava,
Mādhava, Kṛṣṇa, Mukunda, Murāri.

During the poetry, the dancers do not dance but stand on the stage. They dance only during songs, that is, when there is *rāga* and *tāḷa*.

(*sārdūlavikrīditaṁ*)

Hey! Gōpālaka! Ocean of kindness.
Hey! Lord of the Ocean's daughter [Lakṣmi]!
Hey! One who showered kindness on Gajēndra!
Hey! Mādhava! Hey! Rāmānuja!
Hey! Teacher of the three worlds!
Hey! Lord of the Gōpis, protect me.
I am always meditating on your feet.

(*rāga kēdāragaula ēka tāḷa*)

Hari, Nārāyaṇa, Gōvinda, Acyuta, Ananta, Gōvinda.
One who has taken the form of a fish, Gōvinda, tortoise form,
Gōvinda, boar form, Gōvinda, Narahari, Vāmana, Gōvinda.
One who has endless powers, Gōvinda, Bhārgavarāma [Parasurāma],
Gōvinda, Dasaratha's son [Rāma] son of Vasudēva [Kṛṣṇa],
Gōvinda, Buddha, Gōvinda, Kalki, Gōvinda.

(*sārdūlavikrīditaṁ*)

Praise to Vighnēsvara.
You are the only sun to rid us of the darkness of obstacles.
You are the fire to the forest of obstacles.

You are the eagle to the serpents [obstacles].
You are the lion to the elephants.
You are lightning to the great mountain of obstacles.
You are Agastya to the ocean of obstacles.
You are the breeze to the clouds of obstacles.
Vighnēśvara, the lord over all the obstacles, protect me.

As the image is brought from the dressing room to behind the curtain, the *bālagōpālas* exit behind the curtain. The sacred flame is waved as the *bālagōpālas* dance before the image unseen by the audience. The song to which they dance and to which *ārati* is waved is the song to the elephant-faced God, sung during the *pūjā* in the *cauka*.

From behind the curtain, the *bālagōpālas* enter the stage a second time and the trunk of the Gaṇapati image[30] is hung over the top of the curtain and revealed to the audience. The *bālagōpālas* the dance to the following songs:

(*rāga nāṭi ēka tāḷa*)

Please, all of you people, worship that virtuous great Gaṇanātha
of Madawūra.
God of gods! Ocean of kindness.
You have a sacred history.
You are all goodness.
You have never been caught by Manmatha.
Son of Girijā, the great, think of him.

Think of him who has cursed the moon, that beautiful elephant-faced god.
Think of him.
The one who has applied the sandal paste and *kuṅkuma* on his body.
One who protects his devotees like Indra.
Think of him.
He is the overlord of all the gods and the munis.

Lord who is worshipped by the gods and the munis, help us to cross
the river of life.
One who grants all the desires, you are Paramātma [God].
You are feared by the sins.
The one of Madawūra who removes obstacles,
Think of him.

(*rāga kalyāṇi ēka tāḷa*)

Elephant-faced One, now I am meditating on your feet.
Grant me a boon.
You have the rat as your vehicle.
You have a *mōdaka* [a sweetmeat ball] in your hand.
You have the rope, the elephant goad, and the lotus in your hand.
You have fan-like ears and a long sacred thread.
You are pygmy in form, son of Mahēśvara, grantor of wisdom,
holding the book in your hands.

You are called the one who grants requests.
Salutations. Your feet are worshipped by the lotus-born Brahmā.
Son of Gauri, leader of the Gaṇas.

The *bālagōpālas* now dance to a series of drum sounds known as *kautuka*.[31] During the next song, the image is returned to the *cauka* as the *bālagōpālas* dance for the last time during this performance. They salute the audience with their hands in a prayer position and return to the *cauka*.

(*rāga nāṭi aṣṭa tāḷa*)

Oh God! God! After all you are God!
Elephant-faced One, who gives,
who is worshipped in the three worlds.
Grantor of boons to the good people.
Reputed Gaṇapati.

(*rāga bhairavi ti ti tai*)

Salutations, son of Śambu, Gaṇapati, the
rat-vehicled one.

Songs and Poetry in Praise of the Deities

(*bhāṣyaślōka* [Sanskrit poetic meter])

Gaṇapati has come to the stage.
Brahmā has seen him.
Vināyaka starts dancing.
Salutations to you who are dancing in
spirit by twisting your trunk and
moving your shoulders.
You are the king over obstacles.

(*bhāmini* [Kannada poetic meter])

Please protect me Lord Subramaṇya, lord of the three worlds,
who stayed on the mountain to kill the demon Tāraka.
On the seventh day after your birth you killed the great demon
by cutting off his head.
You have the peacock as your vehicle.

(*rāga bhairavi ēka tāḷa*)

Decorated with earrings and diamonds, Svāmi Subbarāya,
Very playful God, Subbarāya of Kailāsa, son of the mountain's
daughter [Pārvatī], killer of Tāraka, Svāmi Subbarāya.

You who have the beautiful peacock as your vehicle,
I will praise your actions forever.

(ślōka)

I worship the lord of the universe who has matted
locks made beautiful by the waves of the Gaṅga.
You have your left side decorated by Gauri who
forever occupies that place.
You are very affectionate to Nārāyana.
You are the one who has destroyed the pride of Manmatha.
You are the lord of Vārāṇasi [Benares].

(rāga śankarābharaṇa ēka tāḷa)

Salutations to Śiva, Śaṁbu.
Salutations to Siva, Hara, Hara, Hara, Hara, Śaṁbu,
who is fond of dance, whose feet are worshipped
by Agastya and Gautama.
You have destroyed Manmatha.
You are known only to the intellect, Saṁbu.
Salutations to Siva.

Songs for the *strīvēśas*' Dances

Now the mood changes, as it is time to sing about the *strīvēśas* (female characters). The words of two of the songs suggest that the two *strīvēśas* represent Rukmiṇi and Satyabhāma, two of Kṛṣṇa's many wives. The first song signals the *strīvēśas* to come from the dressing room to the *raṅgasthaḷa*. During the second song, the *strīvēśas* are on their way from the *cauki*. They dance to the remaining songs.

(rāga madhyamāvati ēka tāḷa)

Candabhama, Hey! Candabhāma! Moon-faced One! Listen!
Hey! Candabhāma! Listen! Candabhāma!
Moon-faced Candabhāma, one who is smeared with sandal
paste, listen.
Wife of Nandagōpa's son! Hey! Bhāma!
Show your beautiful are [dancing].
Salute the lotus-eyed one [Kṛṣṇa].
Hey! Lotus-eyed Bhāma, salute him.
Salutations to him.

(rāga ghaṅṭārava tripuḍe tāḷa)

How can I bear the burning sensation caused by Manmatha?
The cock is crowing.
By good luck only I came across this fellow [Kṛṣṇa].

(rāga ghaṅṭārava aṣṭa tāḷa)

My mind is like the butter exposed to the sun.
The cock is crowing.

There are a number of songs in *Yakṣagāna Sabhālakṣana* to which the *strīvēśas* can dance, but usually the *bhāgavata* chooses only three from the following more popular songs.

(rāga nāṭi ādi tāḷa)

One who is immersed in Rādhā's love, small Gōpāla, small
Gōpāla, who is immersed in Rādhā's love,
Handsome one who has unwrapped my sari while I was asleep.
He steals my sari and doesn't go away; he is an adulterer.
He is strong in passion.
He has discovered my round breasts.
Who is he? I think I know.
One who is immersed in Rādhā's love, small Gōpāla.
In all the world he plays just like Manmatha.
He is the father of that worthy Manmatha.

(rāga nāṭi ādi tāḷa)

Please lotus-eyed lady, show him to me quickly.
I can't bear this Manmatha's fire of passion.
I'll give you a pearl necklace.
Show him to me [Varāha -- the boar] who coming up
from the water killed the proud demon; [Kūrma --
the tortoise] who brought the earth up from the
water; [Nārasiṁha -- the lion-man] who sprang from
within the pillar; [Vāmana -- the dwarf] who asked
for three steps of land; [Paraśurāma] who was born
among the ṛṣis; [Rāma] who couldn't leave his wife;
[Kṛṣna] who was always enjoying women; show me the
one [Kalki] who came riding on the horse.

(rāga tōḍi ādi tāḷa)

Enough! Enough! This is the fruit I bear for trusting you.
I am pleased with your conduct.
Just like the birds, having been charmed by the *nimba*
fruits [bitter] eat them up, I am also thinking of
the one who is causing me distress.

I am thinking of you both day and night.
If the serpent is fed with milk, will he not become
more poisonous?

(*rāga bhairavi ādi tāḷa*)

You are really a virtuous one.
There is reason for me to be angry with you.
Why do you hate me who is afraid of Manmatha?
Show me your smiling face.

(*rāga kalyāṇi ādi tāḷa*)

I can't bear this mischief, he is a great adulterer, mother.
He is a butter thief; he is strong in magic, but at the
same time very charming.
When the ladies are going to fetch water, he blocks their
way and calls them to come to him.
With such small hands he will lift the big mountains and
secretly enjoy the eight ladies.

(*rāga nāṭi ādi tāḷa*)

Dear lady, please bring Mañjunāthasvāmi.[32]
I cannot leave him.
Dear lady, there is no equal to him on this earth.
He is like Bhīma in strength.
He is the one who will fulfill our desire when we pray lovingly.
He [Śiva] gave his body to one wife, his dear companion,
and bore another [Gaṅga] on his head.
Looking at one he acquired five faces [Śiva].
He is the one whose fiery eye destroyed another's husband.
The one who deceived me, leaving me to the mercy of Manmatha,
has not yet come.
I remember him who used to hold the fruits that were shining
inside the upper garment.

(*rāga kalyāṇi rūpaka tāḷa*)

Hey! Lady servant! What am I to do?
My dear lord has gone to another wife,
to a place where they enjoy each other.
I am feeling lonely here.
These are the fruits I reap for marrying him.
What am I to do?
Shall I make a house in the water and keep him there?

Shall I put my burden on him?
Or by some native root, shall I cure him of his cruel ways?
Whom can I tell?
Whom can I ask?
Can I call him a beggar by nature?
[He has gone to beg someone's love.]
Can I give up this jealousy and once again join him?
Shall I ever talk to him again or shall I leave him forever?
Tell me if he has any affection, he [Paraśurāma] who has
     killed his mother; [Rāma] who had monkeys as his companions?
What is the use of giving him advice?
How am I to bear this?
He is so much taken up with Bhāma.
He has permanently settled there.
This great fellow has no shame.
What am I to do?
Shall I get him [Kalki] a horse to ride in the end?

(*rāga nāṭi ādi tāḷa*)

Beautiful lady, rich in her virtues, come and let us enjoy.
I am suffering from passion, come.
I'll embrace you affectionately.
Come, come, come, come.
Beautiful lady, I am thinking of you always in my dreams.
Don't break my heart.
It's not proper! It's not proper!
Llā, llā, llā, wife!

Beautiful lady, Guru Vēṅkaṭēśvara is the only protection.
How can you forget him?
Tā, tā, tā, tā, wife!

(*rāga kalyāṇi ādi tāḷa*)

When am I going to see the handsome Mādhava,
Clever lady, I am asking you?
I can't stay without seeing the lord of my life.
That handsome fellow! When am I going to see him?
Father of Manmatha, who has great powers, one who
     is fond of Gaṅgadhara [Śiva].
When am I going to see that handsome fellow?

Our lord, driver to Pārtha, Viṭṭhala, who is directing
     this cunning drama of the world, when am I going to
     see him?

The next song is always the last song to which the *strīvēśas* dance during this part of the performance.

(rāga kalyāṇi rūpaka tāḷa)

Mother, I am bidding you goodbye.
I am leaving for my home.
I don't know my destiny.
I came here in the hope of staying fro ten days as I
    was suffering from my mother-in-law's nagging.
But, can we erase what Brahmā has written or what
    actions we did in the previous life?

How can I disobey my husband, shamelessly listening to others?
He's always punishing me by abuses.

The *strīvēśas* then salute the audience with their hands in a prayer position and exit.

The Beginning of the *prasaṅga*

Next, a series of drum sounds known as *prasaṅgapīṭhike* are played to inform the performers and the audience that the story is about to begin. When these sounds are completed, the drummers begin the sounds for the first *oḍḍōlaga* (the introduction dance of the major characters in the story). Following the first *oḍḍōlaga*, the story begins, continuing until dawn. Introduction dances are performed by other important characters on their initial entrance.

After the *prasaṅga*

After the final song of the *prasaṅga*, a *strīvēśa* comes to the *raṅgasthaḷa* to dance to the *maṅgalaṁ* songs which follow:[33]

(rāga sāvēri jhaṁpe tāḷa)

Mangalaṁ! Victory! Mangalaṁ!
Lotus-petal-eyed lady of the enemy of Kāma who has a
    beautiful body. Śarvāṇi!
Victory to you, virtuous lady, mistress of the whole world.
One who has the radiance of crores of suns.
Mangalaṁ! Victory! Mangalaṁ!...
Victory to you who is the loving wife of Śaṅkara.
Victory to the one who has made the lion her vehicle
    and who is called Mūkāmba.
Victory to the mother of Ṣaṇmukha, who is born of water.

(*rāga rēgupti ādi tāḷa*)

The original God, charming God of the Yādava race,
    originated by all the Vēdas, Veṅkaṭēśvara of Tirupati,
    lover of the sound of the flute, I salute! I salute!
Salutations to you, Nārāyaṇa, salutations!
You are worshipped by Īśvara and Nārada.

After the *mangalaṁ* songs, the *bhāgavata* says: "*Ā! Hō! Hō!*"; the *strīvēśa* answers: "*Ā! Hō! Hō!*" The *bhāgavata* tells the name of the troupe's village and the troupe's deity. The *strīvēśa* then tells the name of the deity of the patron, gives the name of the patron, and says that what the devotees have offered [the performance] has been accepted by the deity and the *prasādaṁ* has been granted. "We have it. We have it," the *strīvēśa* says, referring to the *prasādaṁ*. And usually at this time the patron pays the money for the performance.

The *bhāgavata* now chants a *ślōka* in honor of God Viṣṇu and includes the name of the troupe's deity.

(*ślōka*)

Mangalaṁ Bhagavān Viṣṇu, Victory to you!
Madhusūdana, son of Dēvaki, Viṣṇu, who
    has the eagle on his flag, Kṛṣṇa,
    Vāsudēva, son of Dēvaki, Naṅdagōpa,
    [troupe's deity's name], Gōvinda.

When the *ślōka* is finished, the *strīvēśa* pays respect to the *maddale*, *tāḷa*, and *canḍe* by touching them with his right hand, and then to the *bhāgavata* and *maddalegāra* by touching their feet with his right hand. Then the *bhāgavata*, the drummers, the *strīvēśa*, and the stage-hands carrying the two oil-lamps return to the *cauka*. On the way, the *bhāgavata* sings about young Kṛṣṇa and his brother Balarāma.

(*rāga jaṅjōṭi rūpaka tāḷa*)

Rāma and Kṛṣṇa have come home.
Open the door!
It is like the heavenly cow returning home.
Let us be happy.

In the *cauka*, the final worship of Lord Gaṇapati is performed; the flaming oil-lamp is waved before the image as the *bhāgavata* and the drummers perform a song in praise of Gaṇapati and of Durgā.

(*rāga mōhana aṣṭa tāḷa*)

Mangalaṁ! Mangalaṁ! One who has held the
    axe, the rope, and the elephant goad.
Victory to one who protects the devotees,
    the son of one who has decorated himself
    with the serpent.

Victory to the killer of Mahiṣāsura,
to one who has worn the armlet.
Mangalaṁ! Victory! Mangalaṁ! Gōvinda!

The performers then shout together, "Gōvinda" meaning that the performance is finished.

Once the performance is over, the troupe and the staff pack the costumes and equipment in straw baskets. Then, with the basket containing the Gaṇapati image carried in the lead, they go to the place of their next performance.

FOOTNOTES

1. In South Kanara District, Mysore State, the term "yakṣagāna" refers to a style of singing and to two local dance-dramas in which this style is sung. *A Kannada-English Dictionary* (J. Butcher, ed., Mangalore, 1923, p. 416) defines *yakṣa* as "the name of certain demi-gods attending on Kubēra," God of Wealth, and *gāna* is defined as "singing, a song, praise" (p. 175). By combining the dictionary definitions, the term *yakṣagāna* might mean the "songs of the demi-gods," a definition which is acceptable to Kota Shivarama Karanth, the noted authority on Yakṣagāna Baḍagatiṭṭu Bayalāṭa. *Kittel's Kannada-English Dictionary* (M. M. Bhatt, ed., III, 1970, p. 1131) defines *baḍaga* as "north"; and *tiṭṭu*, a Kannada word currently in common use in South Kanara but not in the dictionary, means "style." *Baḍagatiṭṭu*, then, refers to that style of Yakṣagāna which is performed in South Kanara primarily around the town of Udipi and north and east of Udipi. (Another style of Yakṣagāna called Ṭeṅkutiṭṭu, meaning "southern style," is also performed in South Kanara.) *Bayal* means "an open space, field or plain" (Bhatt, III, p. 1142) and *āṭa* means "a play" (Bhatt, I, 1969, p. 27); combined, the term *bayalāṭa* means "a play performed in an open-space." Yakṣagāna Baḍagatiṭṭu Bayalāṭa, then specifically refers to the northern space of Yakṣagāna performed out-of-doors.

2. The earliest extant version of this work is entitled only *Sabhālakṣaṇa* and is dated 1621 A.D.; it does not include most of the proceedings listed in the current edition. This earliest palm-leaf manuscript, once in the private collection of Kota Shivarama Karanth, is now in the Yakṣagāna Library at Mahatma Gandhi Memorial College, Udipi, South Kanara.

3. A singer who performs the preliminaries, then learns the *prasaṅgas*, and finally reaches the status of *bhāgavata* (chief singer and director).

4. One who performs the preliminaries on a drum called the *maddaḷe*, then learns to play for the *prasaṅgas*, and finally achieves the status of *maddaḷegāra* (chief player of the *maddaḷe*).

5. One who plays the constant sounding note (*śruti*) on the harmonium (also referred to as a *śruti*).

6. Although the name Rāma usually refers to the hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, it is also one of Mūkāmbika's names.

7. *Yakṣagāna Sabhālakṣaṇa mattu Prasaṅgapīṭhike* (Udipi, 1968-69), p. 4.

All songs, poems and prose used in this paper, except those footnoted otherwise, are taken from *Yakṣagāna Sabhālakṣana mattu Prasaṅgapīṭhike* and were translated by Srimati Puttur Leela Bhat, Lecturer in Kannada, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial College, Udipi, South Kanara, Mysore State, India.

Hiriyādka Purēśvari is the goddess by name of Kaḍgēśvari (Durgā) in Virabhadra Temple, Hiriyadka, South Kanara.

8. In India and other Asian countries, the betel leaf and areca nut, or in a combination with lime paste, spices, coconut, and/or tobacco, are symbols of contracts and hospitality.

9. One who plays a cylindrical drum called *caṇḍe*.

10. Letter from Sri Hiriyadka Gopala Rao, Maddaḷegāra, September 26, 1971.

11. All professional troupes have a Ganapati image with the exception of Maranakatte troupe that uses a framed poster-painting of Kolura Mūkāmbika (Mother Goddess).

12. The title of "first actor" is given to the *bhāgavata*.

13. The word *puruṣa* means "mankind; masculine gender."

14. Although *Yakṣagāna Sabhālakṣaṇa mattu Prasaṅgapīṭhike* lists *rāga saurāṣṭra* for this song, the *rāga* nowadays is usually *ghaṅṭārava*, but it is also sung in *rāga nāṭi*. Sri Hiriyadka Gopala Rao, Sri Nilavara Ramakrishnayya, interview, Udipi, South Kanara, February 10, 1971.

    Many times ragas other than those listed in *Yakṣagāna Sabhālakṣaṇa* for certain songs are sung. Only the ragas currently sung for each song are listed in this paper. For details on the ragas originally listed in *Yakṣagāna Sabhālakṣaṇa*, see Martha Bush Ashton, "Yakshagana Badagatittu Bayalata: A South Indian Dance Drama," Ph.D. Diss., East Lansing, 1972.

15. *Gaṇapa* means "the leader of the attendants upon Lord Siva."

16. A tiny blackish seed, *sesamum indicum*, Bhatt, *Kittel's Dictionary*, 1968, I, p. 298.

17. *Prasādam* is anything that is offered to God and returned to the giver blessed by God.

18. Letters from Sri Hiriyadka Gopala Rao, September 26, 1971, and November 5, 1971. Passages were translated by Srimati Puttur Leela Bhat, December 20, 1971. This song is probably in praise of Lord Kṛṣṇa because musk is associated with Viṣṇu, particularly in the form of Kṛṣṇa.

19. Holders of knowledge; a particular kind of good or evil genius attending upon the gods.

20. The hunter who helped Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa across the river from Ayodhya by boat; Guha might also be Kārthikēya (Ṣaṇmukha).

21. A town in Dharvar District, Mysore State.

22. The heavenly tree grows in Indra's garden and grants any request made of it.

23. The six philosophies are Saṅkhya, Vaiśēṣika, Mīmāmsa, Nyāya, Vēdānta, Yōga.

24. According to A. L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India* (New York: 1958), p. 503, one *hasta* measures eighteen inches. The description in this verse does not fit the description of the performance area now used. It is possible that this was the type of performance area once used for *tāḷa maddaḷe* in which there is no dance. The musicians might have sat in the center of the crescent, flanked on either side by the actors.

25. According to the verse, the *bhāgavata* is not to sit facing south because the kingdom of Yama, God of the dead, is in this direction. Today this practice is not always observed.

26. A *daṇḍa*, according to Basham, p. 503, measures about six feet. Using this measurement, this description also does not fit the present-day *raṅgasthaḷa*.

27. It is thought that this refers to the length of the string connecting the *tāḷa*.

28. *Khagavastu* is part of the *puṅgi*, a gourd instrument that was previously used as the *śruti*.

29. This could have been the king or, nowadays, the patron who pays for the performance.

30. Those troupes that do not have a large image of Gaṇapati's head use the *vīra kase* (male girdle) to represent the trunk of the God's head.

31. The syllables representing these sounds are found in *Yakṣagāna Sabhālakṣaṇa*, p. 24.

32. A combination of Śiva and Viṣṇu.

33. If Lord Kṛṣṇa is on stage at this time, he performs the *mangalah* dance.

Edwina Ranganathan

KṚṢṆANĀṬṬAM: A TRADITIONAL DANCE-DRAMA CONCERNING THE LIFE OF LORD KṚṢṆA

Mānaveda and the Kṛṣṇagīti

Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam[1] takes place in Kerala, a state of South India noted for its scenic beauty; the backwaters surrounded by overhanging coconut palms are typical features. It is not possible for non-Hindus to enter the temples in Kerala, but it is at perhaps the most famous temple in the state, Guruvāyūr, where Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam, a dance-drama depicting the life of Kṛṣṇa in nine nights, is mostly performed. The deity of this temple is Lord Kṛṣṇa, and it was at this shrine that the composer, Raja Mānaveda, used to come and worship.

Raja Mānaveda was a Zamorin king who lived in the seventeenth century. The text of Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam, the *Kṛṣṇagīti*, is in Sanskrit, for the Zamorin kings were as renowned for their scholarship as they were for their prowess in battle. They were wealthy, for it was Calicut, the capital city, that was the greatest exporter of spices to the western world. Both the Portuguese and the Dutch tried to conquer Zamorin territory because of its economic value, but were unsuccessful, although they succeeded elsewhere in Kerala. It was into this line of wealthy and powerful kings that the author of the *Kṛṣṇagīti* was born.[2]

Mānaveda was king for only a short time, succeeding to the throne after the death of Mānavikrama on August 28, 1655. He had already gained a literary reputation with his first work, *Pūrvabhāratacampū*, composed in 1643.[3] It is said that he wrote this to impress his teacher, Kṛṣṇa Piṣaroti of the Ānāyutta family. The king's most renowned work, the *Kṛṣṇagīti*, was written ten years later in 1653 also preceding his succession to the throne. His fellow-student, Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita, was the most outstanding of his court poets.[4] Mānaveda died on February 15, 1658. Some say he was cremated at Trichur and the remains were brought to Guruvāyūr. His bones are supposed to have been buried in the Zamorin's palace. The belief is that this keeps the memory of Mānaveda alive, and indicates respect.[5]

In writing the *Kṛṣṇagīti* it appears that Mānaveda has adhered closely to the *Bhāgavata purāṇa* from the sequence of incidents relating to Kṛṣṇa's life, as depicted in the dance-drama. He was also influenced by a contemporary poet, Melppattūr Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa, who wrote the *Nārāyaṇīya*, a poetical work in praise of Kṛṣṇa. Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa was twelve years senior to Mānaveda. Legend has it that Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa had leprosy and was cured by the deity at Guruvāyūr temple, which inspired him to write the *Nārāyaṇīya*, a work consisting of twenty-seven songs of praise which he sang before the Kṛṣṇa image. As in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, the verses in the *Kṛṣṇagīti* are composed addressing the deity directly; there is also a similarity between the two works in the selection of meters.[6]

Jayadeva's famous work, the *Gītagovinda*, depicting the love of Kṛṣṇa and Rādha, included twenty-four songs, and these are also believed to have influenced Mānaveda. In Kerala these songs were sung at the temples in a singing style called *sōpana*, and were known as *aṣṭapadis*.[7] Each song contains eight sections. These were very popular, and no doubt Mānaveda witnessed these *aṣṭapadis*; he also composed his songs in *sōpana* style.[8] Sometimes the songs were illustrated with dance known as *aṣṭapadi āṭṭam*.

The main *rasas* of Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa's work are *karuṇa* (pathos) and *bhakti* (religious devotion). The poet had molded his form of expression to such a degree that the voice of the reciter would become choked with emotion for love of the image of Kṛṣṇa. Mānaveda, though striking a serious note, aimed at a lighter quality more suited to the medium of dance-drama. *Bhakti* and *śṛṅgāra* (love) are the predominant *rasas* of the *Kṛṣṇagīti*. Some incidents Mānaveda has highlighted by alliterations and has used poetic meters suited to song. Sometimes *raudra*, the *rasa* of fury, is in evidence -- for instance, where Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma fight Kaṁsa's wrestlers.[9]

Bhakti is the emotional, single-minded devotional worship which is characteristic of the Vaiṣṇavite movement. Two human beings in love are symbolic of the love of man for God. The literature of this movement is passionate and highly emotional. It was started by the Alvar saints of South India and spread eventually all over India, later inspiring the *Gītagovinda*, mentioned above. This movement was also strong in Kerala and inspired many poets, including Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa.[10] There is a legend surrounding Mānaveda which indicates that he also was deeply moved by this kind of mysticism and emotional devotion.

It was claimed that Vilvamangalam Svāmiyār, a pious sage and devotee of Kṛṣṇa at the Guruvāyūr temple, could see the deity when he went into a trance. Prince Mānaveda also went to the Guruvāyūr temple, and was intrigued by the holy man's presence. He approached the sage and asked if he, Mānaveda, could also have a vision of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The *svāmiyār* was impressed by the prince and replied that he would endeavor to grant his wish. The next day, to his amazement, Mānaveda, while praying, was able to see Lord Kṛṣṇa as a small boy playing under an *elaññi* tree in the temple. He was so overcome with devotion that he went to embrace the child, but the boy avoided him saying that the sage had said nothing about touching the deity. Mānaveda could not restrain himself, and again tried to take hold of the holy child, but the vision disappeared leaving behind a peacock feather which the boy had worn in his hair.[11] This vision inspired Mānaveda to outpour his devotion by writing the *Kṛṣṇagīti* in praise of the deity. It is said that the crown worn by the actor chosen for Kṛṣṇa in the dance-drama had the same peacock feather that was left by the *elaññi* tree, but that this was later destroyed by fire. The power of religious devotional feeling to be obtained from witnessing a performance of Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam is rated very highly by the people of Kerala. This has not changed for 300 years.

Presentation

Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam's distinguishing feature is dance; less emphasis is laid on hand gestures conveying word by word interpretation as is found in Kathakaḷi. These dance sequences can be lively and energetic, such as the fight of Kṛṣṇa and his brother against Kaṁsa's wrestlers, or slow and gentle, such as the soft swaying movements of the *rāsakṛḍa*. There are no gory scenes of bloodshed; the tone of serious but gentle devotion to Kṛṣṇa is predominant. Even the fighting scenes have a restrained grace about them. The actors portray the narrative sung by the vocalists with natural gestures and expressions, though they use stylized gestures at times. Most of the hand movements complement the actor's feelings or balance his dance steps.[12]

In nine nights the story of Kṛṣṇa's life is told beginning and ending with his birth. Each night contains many episodes from Kṛṣṇa's life; there can be as many as eighteen scenes in one night. The title of the night's performance indicates the highlight of the evening's presentation. The titles are as follows: *avatāram, kāḷiyamardanam, rāsakṛḍa, kaṁsavadham, svayamvaram, bāṇayudham, vivivadham,* and *svargārōhanam.* Two vocalists narrate the story in unison singing in the clear, somewhat difficult *sōpana* style used in *aṣṭapadi āṭṭam.* The lines are not repeated and the main theme follows through with continuity. The vocalists punctuate their singing by a gong and cymbals which they play themselves, and are accompanied by two drums, the *toppimaddaḷam* and the *śuddhamaddaḷam.*

Before the sun sets, the drummers announce the performance by playing in the open air. This is known as *kēḷikoṭṭu.* Immediately preceding the performance a second drumming takes place, known as *araṅṅukēḷi.* The actual performance starts at about 9:00 P.M. and ends at 3:00 A.M. The preliminaries to the main dance-drama begin with an introductory dance by four *gopis* or milkmaids. The dance, in honor of the elephant-headed god, Gaṇapati, is accompanied by singing, and is performed behind the curtain (*tiraśśila*). (As in other traditional South Indian dance-dramas, all the female roles are taken by men or boys.) Then there is another preliminary item, *puṟappāṭu*, danced by the first character to appear in the performance. At the front of the stage, in the center, is a four-foot-high bell metal oil lamp. Around this lamp many of the dances take place, the huge flickering flame lighting up the dancers' faces.

The story unravels in short scenes with an atmosphere of religious devotion predominating throughout; the serious mood broken up and augmented by many attractive dances. Grotesque masks are worn by demon characters such as Pūtanā, Murāsura and Narakāsura, who are introduced by a special curtain effect -- *tiranōkku.* To emphasize their fierce personality, they tear and pull at the curtain uttering roars and cries of anger. In general, the costumes of all roles consist of white pleated cotton skirts which stand out, reaching just below their knees; they also wear long-sleeved shirts of a vivid solid color, such as green or red. There are three main roles: *pacca* (heroic) with a green face; *katti* (knife), showing a less virtuous nature; and *minukku* (shining), a natural color for priests and some female roles, though female deities have green faces. The high, golden crowns worn by kings and princes are dome-shaped. They are spectacular, and glitter in the light of the oil lamp; Kṛṣṇa's crown is surmounted by a rim of peacock feathers. The female role is distinguished by a long, white cotton skirt and veiled head-dress. They also wear long-sleeved shirts as an upper garment.

Avatāram, the birth of Kṛṣṇa, is the first night's play. Bhūdevī, Mother Earth, appears on the stage, her green face showing a divine nature. The Goddess relates her troubles to Brahmā, the Creator, who wears a four-faced mask symbolizing power and sanctity. (Brahmā's mask is indicative of his supernatural powers rather than a grotesque element as in other roles.) Bhūdevī tells Brahmā that Kaṁsa, the tyrannical king, is destroying mankind, spreading evil throughout the earth. Her story is accompanied by dance movements and is called *bhūdevīyāṭṭam*.[13] Brahmā consoles her and promises to redress the wrong, consulting with the other gods. Viṣṇu agrees to remedy the situation by being born again on earth as another incarnation -- this time Kṛṣṇa, the boy prince born to Devakī and Vasudeva. Viṣṇu is represented in this scene with four arms.

Devakī is the sister of the tyrant, Kaṁsa. Kaṁsa has been warned in a dream that the eighth child born to his sister will eventually assassinate him. Terrified, Kaṁsa orders that his sister and her husband should be imprisoned and that every child born to them must be killed under his supervision. He carries out his threat, but the eighth child is saved by divine intervention. The boy-child, Kṛṣṇa, is taken to the valley of Āmpāṭi where he is brought up by a cow-herd chief, Nanda, and his wife, Yaśodā. The girl-child born to them is substituted as the eighth child of Devakī and Vasudeva. Kaṁsa tries to kill her, but she flies out of his hands, warning him that his future killer is elsewhere. Kaṁsa's wrath is emphasized by the curtain effect -- *tiranōkku*. He tugs and pulls at the curtain, shouting with rage; when he reveals his face, the green color is distorted by a knife pattern (*katti*) painted on it. Kaṁsa orders that every baby boy in the kingdom must be slain.

The scene shifts to the pleasant valley of Āmpāṭi where the milkmaids (*gopis*) play with the new baby boy, Kṛṣṇa. They dance, passing the baby from one to another. This dance is called *kūṭiyeṭuttāṭṭam*. The mood changes quickly as Pūtanā, the evil woman sent by Kaṁsa to kill the baby Kṛṣṇa, enters. She appears first as a beautiful woman, Lalita. But as her evil intentions are revealed, her face is changed in appearance by a bizarre mask of black with large staring eyes and fangs protruding over her thick lips. She makes a grab at the baby, intending to kill it by smearing poison on her breasts. She holds the baby to her but finds that she cannot disengage him; the baby sucks the life-blood out of her, she falls to the ground swooning, and finally dies. The people of Āmpāṭi marvel at the strange power of this baby. The *gopis* perform a more elaborate version of the first dance, *kūṭiyeṭuttāṭṭam*, swaying gracefully, passing the baby from one to another and fondling it with faces full of love and wonder.

Kṛṣṇa has grown to boyhood and some of his childhood pranks with the *gopis* are amusing to watch. They are aware of the unusual power he has to attract them; whatever he does, they forgive him. The spirit of this is enhanced in one of the most attractive dance sequences, *mulappū cūṭal*, the jasmine-flower dance. Kṛṣṇa, with bunches of jasmine flowers in his hair, encircles the lamp followed by his brother, Balarāma, and the *gopis*. They dance with faces glowing in adolescent love, turning from side to side, their hands moving in graceful patterns in front of them.

The growing power of Kṛṣṇa is shown on the second night as he triumphs over many evil demons in the shape of snakes, birds, etc. *Kāḷiyamardanam* is the title of this night's performance of which the highlight is the killing of the many-hooded serpent, Kāḷiya. Before this, Kṛṣṇa encounters a stork, Baka, who tries to kill him with its beak. The stork has a feathered costume, and snaps its beak loudly. Its cumbersome movements simulate the awkwardness of a stork on land. Kṛṣṇa grabs the vicious beak and tugs at it. After a struggle, he pulls it out, and dances with joy holding the beak in his hands. This dance is called *kokkeṭuttāṭṭam*. There are other minor incidents before the climax where Kṛṣṇa encounters the dangerous serpent, Kāḷiya. This snake lives in the river where the people of Āmpāṭi drink and bathe; it has polluted the water so that they can no longer use it. Kṛṣṇa dives into the water and seizes the serpent's tail, although Kāḷiya resists him. Kṛṣṇa manages to subdue the serpent, eventually dancing on its head until it bleeds. Kāḷiya bows in submission to Kṛṣṇa's superior power and moves to another part of the river. The dance emphasizes the quality of the power of innocence; the light, agile steps getting faster yet firmer as he moves from one side of the snake's head to the other, holding its tail: his youthful innocence charged with supernatural strength to overcome evil.

Kṛṣṇa then plays a prank on the *gopis* stealing their clothes while they bathe in the river. He runs up a tree to taunt them and will not return their garments until they have pleaded with him. The night ends showing the supreme might of Kṛṣṇa as he lifts the Gōvarddhanam hill to protect the village from rain floods sent by Indra.

Developing into manhood, Kṛṣṇa, on the third day, is shown in adolescent love-play with the *gopis*. This night's performance is *rāsakṛḍa*, and it abounds in dances of love and grace. Kṛṣṇa plays on the flute (*vēṇugānam*). Drawn by the music, the *gopis* assemble; Kṛṣṇa looks at them, studying their mood and moved by their love, he sports with them in a graceful dance, *lōkalōcanam*. To subdue the *gopis*' pride, Kṛṣṇa chooses one of them, Rādha, and runs off with her. The others search for him -- even Rādha loses him. They find him and begin to dance the *rāsalīlā* in which the love of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopis* reaches fruition. They dance round the lamp in a chain dance pattern, the glowing faces of the *gopis* and the serene power of Kṛṣṇa and his brother Balarāma, reflected by the light of the flame as they move towards and away from each other. This dance is also called *mulappū cūṭal*, or jasmine-flower dance. Further dances in this vein follow, such as *vāmatocanam*. At the end of the night's performance, the mood changes as a demon, Śankha Cūḍa, tries to steal one of the *gopis* from Balarāma, but Kṛṣṇa comes to the rescue and kills the demon.

Kaṁsavadham, or the killing of Kamsa, is the subject of the fourth night's drama. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma perform a short introductory dance, *purappāṭu*, and start for Mathura, the town where Kaṁsa resides. It is believed that many of the demons who tried to kill Kṛṣṇa in his early life were sent by Kaṁsa. The king is aware of Kṛṣṇa by now and the consequent threat to his life. He has heard of the legends surrounding the prince's divine powers, and devises a plot to kill Kṛṣṇa. Kaṁsa invites both the young men to participate in a wrestling match, intending to challenge them with the most famous wrestlers in the city.

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma accept the challenge, but as they are about to enter the arena, a mad elephant, Kuvalayapēta, rushes upon them. Nothing daunted, the boys skilfully dodge its attacks, finally killing the elephant and wrenching out its tusks. They dance in triumph with the tusks in their hands; the dance is called *kuvalayapēṭa āṭṭam*.

Excitement mounts as Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma step into the arena to meet the formidable wrestlers, Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika. They have fierce, black moustaches and head bands. They wear no upper garment to show off their broad shoulders and muscular stature. The fight is portrayed in a spectacular dance, *mallanmarāṭṭam*. The whole stage is used as the wrestlers and their opponents leap and bound, coming into clinches and throwing each other off. Kṛṣṇa fights Cāṇūra, and Balarāma Muṣṭika. The two youths dodge and spring managing to slip away from the strong grasp of the huge, muscular wrestlers, eventually tiring them out and killing them. As soon as he has killed his opponent, Kṛṣṇa -- as though possessed -- suddenly leaps up to the stand where Kaṁsa is watching the fight, and slays the king in front of the crowd. There is widespread rejoicing by the people, who are thus released from the burden of tyrannical rule. Kṛṣṇa releases his parents from prison.

Svayamvaram, marriage, is the theme of the fifth night, where both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma get married. Kṛṣṇa has two wives (an accepted custom). He has to fight to win his first wife, Rukmiṇī. Her brother, Rukmi, had arranged another husband for her, but at the celebrations Kṛṣṇa sends word to her of a secret plan to abduct her. (Rukminī had pleaded with her brother to let her marry Kṛṣṇa, but this request was refused.) The elopement plans are successful and Kṛṣṇa carries Rukminī away in his chariot. Her brother chases the eloping couple, but Kṛṣṇa fights him off and marries Rukmiṇī. This is shown in a dance, *iḷakiyāṭṭam*. Balarāma marries Revatī. Kṛṣṇa's second marriage is to Satyabhāmā, daughter of King Indrajit. The king had accused Kṛṣṇa of stealing a precious stone belonging to him. Kṛṣṇa was determined to clear himself. After searching for the culprit, he eventually discovered that an old bear, Jāmbavān, had the stone. The bear has a white mask and a furry body. He makes an amusing role, scratching himself and walking almost all the time on all-fours, lumbering around like an old animal. Kṛṣṇa has a hard time convincing Jāmbavān to give him the stone, but eventually the bear bows down, realizing the divine presence, and relinquishes the stone. Kṛṣṇa takes the stone to the king who shows his gratitude by giving his daughter, Satyabhāmā, in marriage.

Kṛṣṇa is now married, and as an adult takes the responsibilities as a leader of his people, fighting many formidable enemies. The sixth night, *bāṇayuddham*, shows some of these battles ending with the slaying of Bāṇa. The second scene in this night's performance shows an impressive tableau of Kṛṣṇa and Satyabhāmā mounted on the back of the mythological eagle, Garuḍa. Two oil lights are held either side of the tableau, and a curtain of brightly-colored silk squares is held in front of Garuḍa, who flaps his wings. This group is setting off to fight Narakāsura, a tyrannical king.

Their first encounter is with General Murāsura, the leader of Narakāsura's army. The general has five gruesome heads (shown as masks), and behaves more like an enraged monster than a man. Unabashed by his appearance, Kṛṣṇa fights and kills the general. The king, Narakāsura, infuriated by the news, comes to fight them. During the course of the fight, Kṛṣṇa feigns death, while his wife, Satyabhāmā, fights the demon king. She successfully fends off his blows and attacks, managing to distract Narakāsura's attention from Kṛṣṇa long enough for him to leap up and kill the king.

Kṛṣṇa grows older, and his family increases. He has a grandson, Aniruddha, who has fallen in love with Bāṇa's daughter, Usha. Bāṇa, an unpopular but powerful king, refuses to permit any marriage. He locks Aniruddha in his palace after discovering the boy in his daughter's quarters. Kṛṣṇa marches with his men to the gates of the city to rescue his grandson. It is believed that Śiva himself guards the city gates. However, Kṛṣṇa manages to trick the guard and gains entrance, captures the city and releases his grandson. Bāṇa finally agrees to the marriage. Kṛṣṇa punishes him by severing his thousand arms.

Vivivadham, the title of the seventh night, includes the slaying of the monkey Vivida. The monkey is dressed in a costume of brownish-black fur and wears a mask. In this night's performance some famous episodes from the epic, the *Mahābhārata*, are included. There is another exciting fight-dance between Bhīma, one of the Pandava brothers, and Jarasandha. The episode when Kṛṣṇa tries to prevent the gory battle of Kurukshetra, acting as intermediary between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, is portrayed. The battle takes place, however, and Kṛṣṇa's advice to Arjuna on the battlefield, immortalized in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, is included in one of the scenes.

The eighth night, *svargārōhanam*, gives the closing events of Kṛṣṇa's life. Balarāma dies, and Kṛṣṇa, while in the forest, is mistaken for a bird by a hunter. The hunter, Jarā, shoots a poisoned arrow into Kṛṣṇa's foot, then realizes with horror his mistake and bows down, begging forgiveness. The final scene, *anantaśayanam*, is presented in tableau form. Kṛṣṇa as Mahāviṣṇu is shown resting on a serpent with Bhūdevī by his side, and surrounded by other gods as they ascend to heaven.

The ninth and last night repeats *avatāram*, the birth of Kṛṣṇa, to show that Viṣṇu will come again to protect the world from evil.

It is thought that the style of costume comes from Kūṭiyāṭṭam, a more ancient dance-drama form from Kerala State. Some of the dance steps and masks have been adapted from folk dramas and dances, for instance, the jasmine flower dance is said to have come from a folk dance called *kai koṭṭi kaḷi*. The energetic fight-dances may have been borrowed from war dances prevalent at the time when warriors returned from battle to celebrate their victories.

Kṛṣṇa's life, then, is revealed in a pageant of short, colorful scenes, enlivened by the energetic grace of the dance sequences. The prevailing mood throughout -- love and devotion.

Make-up, Costume, Music and Dance

It has already been noted that the main roles, distinguished by their make-up, are *pacca* (green), *katti* (knife) and *minukku* (shining). However, an equally important category are the masked roles in Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam.[14]

The hero has the *pacca* or green-colored face. This color is obtained by mixing yellow and blue powders together with oil. Around the lower jaw a border of hardened rice paste known as *cuṭṭi* is applied. The eyes are made up with black collyrium. A U-shaped Vaiṣṇava mark is painted on the forehead, and the lips are painted red. The green color is associated with valor and heroic qualities. It should be noted here, though, that Balarāma and Śiva both have gold-colored faces. Kings and princes play the *pacca* role for the most part, and thus their headgear is a high, dome-shaped crown of gold called a *kirīṭam*. Kṛṣṇa's crown also has a rim of trimmed peacock feathers at the top. Some crowns have a disc at the back, and some a gold-colored knob at the top. The upper half of the body is covered with a long-sleeved red shirt, but those in particular roles wear different colors, such as Kṛṣṇa who wears blue. Heavy gold necklaces and gold bands on the arms and wrists add elegance to this garment. The upper cloth is pleated into a sort of scarf which they hang around their neck; the ends are tied and pulled out to form a bunch (said to be a lotus shape). The lower garment consists of a pleated cotton skirt with black and orange bands around the border. It comes to just below the knee, and stands out, supported by underskirts.[15]

Katti, a knife-shaped pattern drawn on the *pacca* face, signifies impurity. Additional patterns are drawn in above each eyebrow and just above the upper lip on either side of the face in elaborate curve-shaped lines of red. It is interesting to note that Śiśupāla and Kaṁsa have *pacca* make-up at first, then, as their asuric (evil) tendencies begin to show, *katti* patterns are painted on.

Minukku (shining) is natural-colored make-up worn predominantly by the female roles, but sages and minor roles wear natural-colored make-up also. Bhūdevī, Satyabhāmā, Yaśoda and Rādhā have green faces, however, possibly because of their relation to Viṣṇu. These roles also have a *cuṭṭi* rice paste border, but it is not as thick as those worn by the male *pacca* role. Another exception is Rukminī and Devakī's make-up, which is a deep rose color. The headdress is common to all, and consists of a long veil swept up on one side by a horn projection worn around the head; the veil is drawn behind the ears and hangs a long way down the back. Jewelry adornments are worn around the neck and arms, and particularly striking are the large gold earrings. The upper garment is a long-sleeved shirt like those worn by the male role and they have long, ankle-length, pleated white skirts made of cotton; unlike those in the male role, however, these skirts hang straight down. They have a decorated belt worn loosely around the waist.

Masks emphasize the supernatural or grotesque aspects of personality. They are sometimes multi-colored and of weird and bizarre design. The main masked characters are Brahmā, Narakāsura, Jāmbavān, Pūtanā, Vividan, Murāsura and Yama. Minor roles such as Śiva's guards also wear masks. The masks are larger than life-size with exaggerated features. Animal roles also wear masks. Different roles are distinguished by their masks. Brahmā wears a rather different mask emphasizing his divine qualities as supreme soul and creator. It gives an aura of wisdom and peace. The mask has four faces painted in a natural color with eyes shaped like a fish in elegant curves; through these a strong sense of power pervades. The mouth has a benign expression. Murāsura's mask denotes a fierce and barbaric quality. It has five faces, each painted a different color; in one the predominant colors are red and green, in another they are black and red. The design consists of sweeping curved lines of varying colors on the cheeks and circling the eyes, which are set in deep black. The mouth is wide open, with fierce red or black lips curling back from vicious teeth and fangs. Narakāsura has a thick red beard on his mask. His teeth are bared with long, protruding fangs (*damstram*) jutting out on either side of his black lips. White excrescences appear on the forehead and chin. The predominant color of his face is red with thick white lines curving on the cheeks. The eyes are set in black hollows, and a crown of gold and red rises to a great height with an arched piece behind.[16]

Yama's mask is a dull, dark green signifying the god of death. Pūtanā's mask is large and jet black in color; she has fangs and thick lips of bright red. Two crescent-shaped designs appear on her cheeks and an ugly excrescence appears on the end of her nose. Huge curves are drawn for eyebrows above protruding, glaring eyes in white and black. She has a high cylindrical-shaped hat, also black in color. The animals, Jāmbavān and Vividan, besides their costumes of white and brown fur, have white masks with fur on them. Śiva's guards have black masks with yellow and red lines; these masks are smaller than those worn by the main roles.

All masks have elaborate headdresses with various shapes and aureoles to decorate them. They are made of light wood with cloth padding and are one of the main distinctive characteristics of Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam.[17]

Dance sequences inevitably are interwoven with the different rhythms (*tālas*). The groups of dance steps or *kālaśams* take their names from the rhythm they are set to, such as *cempavāṭṭam kalaśam* and *aṭantavāṭṭam kalaśam*. Some of the most common *tālas* or rhythms used in Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam are *cempa*, *cempata*, *aṭanta* and *pañcari*. Their use depends on their place in the story and the character dancing them. A fast, lively tempo will be used for fights, and slower tempos for more decorative dances.[18] It should be observed that the less stylized movement of dance steps in Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam -- as opposed to Kathakaḷi, for instance -- allows the dancer to adopt a more natural stance with his feet flat on the ground. This enables him to spring and leap in the energetic dances with extraordinary agility. Some of the other more stylized dancing requires the dancer to stand on the outside of the feet, thus limiting the steps from this aspect.

The old Kerala *sōpana* style of singing is adopted in Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam with both vocalists singing the lines of the Sanskrit text continuously. Some Karnatak *rāgas* are discernible, such as *paḍi*, *bhairavi*, *tōti*, *pantuvarāḷi*, *saurāṣṭram*, *śankarābharaṇam*, *kamodari*, etc.[19] Although they sing in unison, the vocalists complement each other, blending or singing in high and low range. The lines are not repeated since the repertoire of hand gestures is not very elaborate.

The instruments are mainly drums. The excitement in faster dances is built up by the high-pitched drum, *toppimaddaḷam*, but the lower-pitched drum, *śuddhamaddaḷam*, complements the *toppimaddaḷam* adding an effective steady pulse to the sound. Those drums are oblong and barrel-shaped. They are suspended around the waist and played with the hands. Another type of drum, *iṭaykka*, is used occasionally. It has a very distinctive rising and falling quality caused by tightening and releasing cords attached to the drum heads with the hand. This drum is often decorated with colored cords and tassels, and it is beaten with a stick. Each vocalist carries another instrument: one a metal gong beaten with a stick, and the other a pair of cymbals. These keep time to the singing. A conch shell may also be blown to signify sacred and auspicious moments.[20]

Training Methods and Syllabus

Young trainees for Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam are put through a rigorous system; some of it based upon the warfare training of the Nāyar community in the *kaḷari* gymnasiums. The system is similar to that found in Kūṭiyāṭṭam and Kathakaḷi training establishments. In the early days the Zamorin king would select his troupe from the sons of leading Nāyar (warrior) nobles of his court. It was considered a great honor to perform in the Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam troupe. Nowadays there is no restriction; boys as young as six years old, usually from poor families, offer themselves for training. Their parents encourage them, for they feel that it is better for their sons to dedicate their life to the Guruvāyūr temple than to become a servant, or perhaps be completely unemployed. Mr. A.C.G. Raja is the present superintendent of the troupe, and what follows is his description of the program for training actors in Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam.

During the rainy season, the actors undergo a strenuous physical massage known as *ul̤iccal*, as well as their other training. The students rise at 3:00 A.M. and rub their bodies with oil. Then they do skipping and jumping exercises in order to perspire and get their bodies in the right condition for massaging. The massage is given by the teacher or *āśān*, who holds onto a rope and actually massages with his feet. This gives the students stamina for their intensive course and makes the body flexible so that they dance smoothly and with grace. At 6:30 A.M. they eat *kanni* or rice gruel and *ghī* (clarified butter) for breakfast.

At 7:00 A.M. steps for dance training (*abhiyāsam*) starts. They learn steps and movements of different roles. The dance steps are set to rhythmic syllables (*bols*) which they must also learn. The text has to be memorized so that they are aware of how the dance sequences occur in the story. Basic training is given at first, and then they proceed to specialize in particular roles. They should be able to interchange roles during a performance. At 11:00 A.M. they bathe and eat lunch. At 1:00 P.M. training in *rasābhinayam* begins. They must learn to express the nine moods or *rasas* (according to Hindu dramatic theory), i.e. *śṛn̄gāra* (erotic), *vīra* (heroic), *karuṇa* (pathetic), *adbhuta* (wonder), *raudra* (fury), *hasya* (comic), *bhayānaka* (fearful), *bhībatsa* (disgust) and *śānta* (peace). The main *rasa* in Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam would be *śṛn̄gāra*, but from love stems the refinement -- *bhakti* -- religious love and devotion. However, all the moods are portrayed at one time or another and have to be learned. To express these, they need control of all facial muscles, particularly the eyes, eyebrows and mouth whose expressions are complemented by movements of the hands and body.

Colliyāṭṭam is from 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. They repeat dance movements and other training of the morning, but now it is accompanied by music, particularly drumming. After a rest they go to prayers (*nāmajapam*) in Guruvāyūr temple; this instills the sense of religious dedication necessary to their art. Then they practice exercises associated with combat as was practiced in the *kaḷari* gymnasiums of Kerala.

Some of the *rasābhinayam* is rehearsed again before they are allowed to retire to bed at 9:30 P.M.

The training period is known as *kaccakeṭṭu abhyāsam*. A day such as the one described above would be for a more advanced student. For the first six months or so they learn nothing but the basic steps. The students must also watch all performances and learn how the more experienced actors interpret the technique. It takes ten years of training before an actor is considered accomplished enough to join the troupe. Mr. Raja described the syllabus, which is thorough and comprehensive. The general plan is outlined below.

The training starts with a salutation to the gods (*kumpiṭal*) and then begins the work with the *āśān*, or teacher, on physical training exercises to loosen up their body. They also learn elementary dance steps. This takes six months. For the next eighteen months they learn sequences from the *avatāram*, the birth of Kṛṣṇa. The dance steps are learned from *kūḍiyetuttāṭṭam* and the first part of *mullappūcūṭal* (Kṛṣṇa's dance with the *gopis*). They learn the text and roles associated with the first night's performance. The second night's drama, *kāḷiyamardanam*, is learned during the next two years. In this period, dances associated with Kṛṣṇa slaying his demon enemies are learned, as well as the introductory dance, called *puṟappāṭu*.

Rāsakṛḍa sequences are learned for the next two years. The *mullappūcūṭal* dance steps are completed and polished. *Kaṁsavadham* training -- another two years -- includes the magnificent fighting dance between Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and Kaṁsa's wrestlers. Once they have mastered this dance, they can apply the steps to other fight-dances. This particular dance is considered to be the most difficult part of the student's training.

Thus the training continues until all the different events have been covered from both the acting and dancing aspect and memorization of the text aspect. Even after this training is completed, there is not always a vacancy in the troupe, and the young actor may have to wait a long time to join the main troupe permanently. Vocalists also devote ten years to the completion of their knowledge of the *Kṛṣṇagīti* and the songs. Their first two years consist of general training in music before they go on to specialize in Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam itself. The drummers have five years training, as do the make-up artists (*cuṭṭikāranamār*).

Altogether there are about forty people in a Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam troupe -- five vocalists, six drummers, three make-up artists and twenty-one experienced actors, with new graduates making up the remainder of the total number. The oldest *āśān* is over eighty-six years old. Performances used to take place only in the Zamorin's palace or at Guruvāyūr temple. The troupe was actually attached to the palace, but recently it was moved to the jurisdiction of the Guruvāyūr temple Dēvasvam. This relaxing of the rules has enabled the dance-drama to gain more popularity, and the troupe can now perform in other temples and even outside them in private homes for people who have taken a religious vow. It is significant, and this is partly due to Mr. Raja's enthusiasm that the number of performances during a year has increased from two to about a hundred in the span of only five years.

Conclusion

Various legends are associated with Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam. One legend has led people to believe that Kathakaḷi emerged from Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam. The story is that a king from another part of Kerala State, the Raja of Koṭṭārakkara, was so impressed after seeing a performance of Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam at the Zamorin's palace, that he requested the king to allow the troupe to perform at the Koṭṭārakkara palace. The Zamorin, however, dismissed this idea by saying that only a learned audience could appreciate the high-flown Sanskrit of the text. This insult made the Raja of Koṭṭārakkara compose his own dance-drama, Rāmānaṭṭam, depicting the life of Rāma in eight episodes. This was written in the local language and its popularity spread, since most people in the audience could understand it. Eventually new troupes sprang up and new composers wrote their own stories. Since these no longer concerned the life of Rāma, they adopted another name -- Kathakaḷi.[21]

Another story shows the rivalry between the Raja of Cochin and the Zamorins of Calicut. When the troupe went to perform in Cochin, a live elephant was set upon the actors during *kaṁsavadham*. The actors in the roles of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma killed the elephant, but the man taking the part of Kṛṣṇa was so enraged that he lept into the audience and tried to kill the Raja of Cochin. He was stopped by the head *āśān* of the troupe, who quietly removed the crown of peacock feathers from the actor's head and immediately his anger subsided.

Superstitions also surround the place and time of performances. The troupe used to perform in the inner shrine of the temple, and the doors to the image of Kṛṣṇa were left open. One evening the idol of Kṛṣṇa completely disappeared during the dance of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopis*. The sage who had inspired Mānaveda appeared and prayed, asking the Lord why he had gone away. Kṛṣṇa was said to reply that he could not remain idle during the *rāsakṛḍa* dance; it was believed that he joined the dancers. Nowadays, performances should only take place after the temple *pūjās* and rituals are over and the doors to the shrine are closed. Therefore, they must finish before 3:00 A.M. when the doors are opened again for worship. The place of performance has been moved from the inner shrine to the northern part of the temple.

Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam suffered a serious setback when Kathakaḷi became so widespread and popular. It had become stereotyped and lacking in incentive to improve, since it was performed for so many years only in the Zamorin's palace and at the temple. Many of the dances and movements have been lost altogether because the main emphasis was placed on the words of the text and the devotional aspect. Now the artistic side has been developed and improved, as has the enthusiasm of the troupe. It can now take its place securely among the great traditional dance-dramas of Kerala.

FOOTNOTES

1. Malayalam transliterations are from the *Malayalam Lexicon*, (Trivandrum, 1964), I. Dr. R.E. Asher, Edinburgh University, researched these transliterations for me. Sanskrit transliterations are by Dr. P.S. Mohan, Wesleyan University.

2. K.M. Pannikkar, *A History of Kerala: 1498-1801* (Annamalainagar, 1960), pp. 8-27, 209-376.

3. K. Kunjunni Raja, *Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam* (A paper read at the Fine Arts and Technical Science Section of the Nineteenth All-India Conference, Delhi, 1957).

4. Pannikkar.

5. Information communicated to me by A.C.G. Raja, Superintendent of the Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam troupe at Guruvāyūr temple and/or confirmed by my own eyewitness accounts.

6. Raja.

7. P. Sambamoorthy, "Sacred Music," *South Indian Music*, IV (Madras, 1963), p. 189.

8. Raja.

9. Pannikkar.

10. Mrinalini Sarabhai, *"Krishnanattam"*, *Mārg* 19, 2 (March 1966), p. 43.

11. Raja.

12. A.C.G. Raja and/or personal observations.

13. *Ibid.*

14. K. Bharatha Iyer, "Krishnanattam," *Times of India Annual* (Bombay, 1966), p. 71.

15. Personal observations.

16. Iyer.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Personal observations.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Iyer.

21. Raja.

EBRAHIM ALKAZI

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JSAL: Would you please say something about your early theatrical experiences and training?

Alkazi: I had my early education in Jesuit institutions, St. Vincent's School in Poona and St. Xavier's College in Bombay. It was during my school days in Poona that I was encouraged to go in for the theater. There were the usual annual performances, the recitations, the participation in things like tableaux; and, in addition to that, our principal, who was then one Father Rickland, was extremely keen on putting on a fairly substantial play in the course of the year. I invariably participated in those productions. From there I went to Bombay. At that time St. Xavier College had an extremely powerful amateur dramatic organization largely under the inspiration of a young man named Sultan Padamsee, who had recently returned from Oxford and who had decided to set up a Shakespeare group as part of this dramatic society. I worked under him as an actor in several Shakespearean plays, and then we went on to plays like Wilde's *Salomé*, one-act plays, and some of Priestly's plays. I think, though, that at the time of Priestly's plays, Sultan Padamsee had died. Unfortunately, he committed suicide at an extremely early age, something like twenty-two or twenty-three. But in those two or three years of very intensive and hectic work, he had established a modern movement in the theater in Bombay. I believe that it was largely his influence in those years that gave the progressive movement in theater its impetus. This was, I think, from 1943 or 1944 to 1946. My dates may be a little off.

As it happened, three members of this company married three sisters who belonged to the Padamsee family. I married one of them; Deryck Jeffereis, who's a lighting expert in Bombay, married another; and Hamid Sayani, who's a very big name now in radio and in film, married the third sister. To a certain extent this helped to hold the group together. It was because of this association that the group had a certain stability and force after Sultan Padamsee's death. In 1948, I decided, against my parents' wishes, to go to London and to acquire training there. I wished to go to the Old Vic Theater School, but couldn't because I'd just missed the beginning of term. I would have had to wait another year to get into the school. So I decided that, rather than hang around London for that year, I would go to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts. I was thrilled at the time, of course, to be able to get in, and spent two and a half years there. I must say, however, that I was most unhappy at the Royal Academy. I had come to a place from which I expected the highest academic standards and the finest artistic and professional standards in theater. I discovered instead a rather closed institution, one which had not opened itself out to living theater movements in other parts of the world, particularly on the Continent, not even to Russia, contemporary Germany, nor to the American movement. I felt that I would have to give up my training there. I was persuaded not to, and I'm glad now that I did not, because at least I learned there what I should not do in theater. I also learned that work in the theater is largely a matter of self-education, and that there are no institutions which can really give you the kind of training which you would ideally like. You acquire your training wherever you go. I spent many months at the Victoria and Albert Museum, for example, doing my own research on the theater from the fantastic collection of theater material there, as well as at the British Drama League. I was also committed to attend the British Drama League's producer's course in which I did extremely well. To the horror of the authorities of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, I walked away with the Broadcasting Award of the BBC. They thought it was all a mistake, and I can understand now why they thought so.

Incidently, I would like to mention that while I was there I took advantage of every opportunity to go to France to study the work of Jean Louis Barrault, who has established the Marigny Theatre. I made an intensive study of the French theater as it existed under Copeau, Dullin, and the four principal inheritors of Copeau's tradition: Baty, Jouvet, and so on. I saw a great many of their productions at the time. In the early stages I think I was influenced more by the French theater than by any other. It was the one I came to know best. I studied German theater intensively, but I knew that at that time -- it was 1948 to 1951 -- Brecht had done very little in his theater. The first glimmerings of his achievements emerged in the writings of Bentley around those years. And of course I studied the Russian theater in depth, especially the theater immediately after the Revolution, that of Tairov, Meyerhold, Vakhtangov, and the other producers, especially Okholopkov.

JSAL: When did you return to India?

Alkazi: In 1951, if I'm not mistaken.

JSAL: Why did you come back?

Alkazi: I'd always intended to come back. I'd no intention of remaining in England. I've always had a horror of people leaving their own countries to seek careers elsewhere. I really felt that a great deal of work needed to be done, not only in Indian theater, but in Indian society. This is something that has troubled me all along. I don't really think on the theater as being the exercise of an art only indirectly connected with what goes on in society. I think there's a very, very close connection between politics and theater, and between social conditions and theater. I think the theater needs to play an even more active part in shaping the way people live, in creating a progressive form of government which is meaningful to large numbers of people. I see the theater as being an extremely dangerous art form. It tends to exaggerate epoigtic tendencies. One talks a great deal about team spirit in the theater, but one invariably finds that particularly where there's a great deal of insecurity in the profession, very little of this team spirit remains, and if it does, it's extremely short-lived. The only strong example of it which we have is in those countries where the people have been provided with material security and the opportunity to develop their artistic talents.

JSAL: So you came back and remained in Bombay?

Alkazi: I was in Bombay, yes. I belonged to Bombay. Before leaving for England after Sultan Padamsee's death, we had established The Theatre Group and I had the privilege of being its first president. I was still very young. I remember I went in for a lot of oratorical stuff which I shudder at now. But I believed at the time that if The Theater Group was going to be a group of any great consequence, its fairly large membership (I think we had around 150 at the time) would have to form a cohesive group. Everyone, from those who were directly involved in the productions to the associate members, ticket-sellers and publicity men, should know what was going on in the organization. For example, why the plays were selected, when, and what impact they would have on the Indian theater movement. I felt that as long as we had the gift of the English language, we should exploit it. We should use the finest plays available in English, especially those which were relevant to the Indian conditions -- theatrically socially, or otherwise.

To begin with, I started a course. I remember now, vaguely, that it consisted of something like thirty-five lectures covering all aspects of the theater, dramatic literature, and the fine arts, politics, sociology, and economics. We had a class of around thirty-five students. We did, if I remember correctly, a repertoire of four or five plays, one was Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, another was Ibsen's *Ghosts* done in the arena style. I think we also did Anouhl's *Antigone*. We did a very exciting version, stylistically, of *The Bar* by Chekhov. Then we did quite a lot of Sartre, such as *Huis-clos* and *Les Mains sales*. These were fairly ambitious plays, and we covered a vast range of material. All this was done in English. In addition, we immediately began courses in Hindi. You should know that we started classes in Hindi in The Theater Group as early as 1951, and several of the Group members took them. We also organized a Hindi section in The Theater Group which started doing translations of some of these plays. Our hope was eventually to do original plays in Hindi. As you know, Bombay is not really a fertile environment for Hindi; it would have been more appropriate to have had a Marathi or Gujarati section -- these languages are native to the region. Very few people in Bombay even now speak Hindi, although it is more or less the established language of the country. It was extremely weak in those days, and has been established in Bombay only with difficulty.

JSAL: How long were you in Bombay?

Alkazi: Oh, I was in Bombay until 1962 -- from 1951 to 1962. We went on doing a large number of plays. I think we did around four or five productions a year. In addition to that, we had an experimental section which did smaller plays, the works of younger producers who are now fairly well established, Alyque Padamsee, Sylvester da Cunha, and others. They were young producers in those days who were given a chance to advance, and occasionally they handled some of the larger productions as well. But it was in 1954 that I stated clearly to The Theater Group that it should decide whether to remain an amateur organization or go a step further. By that I meant that it should take on the responsibility of establishing training on a concrete basis by organizing a school of drama which would be one of its most important activities. I felt that any new talent which the Group attracted by way of actors, playwrights, producers, and so on, should be provided with sound basic training before entering the theater. Otherwise, as it happens in most places, the theater tends to remain on an amateur level. It can't. From that amateur level it must go on to more difficult tasks; it must develop and assume greater responsibilities. All of this was always connected at the back of my mind with the social function of the theater.

In 1954 we established The Theater Unit. I need not really have left The Theater Group, for we had an overwhelming majority of votes in the governing body of the Group as well as the votes of its memebers. I think I was extremely stupid. I demanded that the decision about my proposal be unanimous so that it wouldn't become a matter of politics. I felt that the Group shouldn't have to deal with the question anew at every annual election, for I feared that even if we established a school of drama, of dramatic arts, in 1954, it could be closed down the next year. I felt that such a school, once established, should continue as long as possible, for at least twenty or thirty years, and that once you took on the responsibility, you couldn't really shake it off. Therefore, I'm very glad that I committed myself to that ideal. It demanded from me a great deal of responsibility, and a clear-cut direction, and required as well that everything I did be seen not only from a personal point of view, but in terms of what would be useful and necessary for us to do as a group. It could not, for example, be a question of which plays would best show off my own producing talents. I think we maintained the school for five or six years. It turned out some students who are by now, I understand, doing extremely good work in Bombay. Some, like Kusum Bahl, later went abroad; one went to Brandeis University, another to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts; both had magnificent careers there. They have tried to do something significant in theater.

At the same time in 1954, I was invited by the Ministry of Education in Delhi to prepare a scheme for a national school of drama, which I did. I was immediately asked to take on the directorship of the National School of Drama, which I refused to do because, as I told you earlier, I don't think you prepare a scheme in order to give yourself a job in it. And, secondly, at that time I felt that I was far too young to take on this national responsibility. I needed to find myself in the theater and I hated to get tied down to any institution which perhaps had the danger of turning into a bureaucracy. I'm still very glad that I didn't take it on at that time. I'm sure that had I done so, I would have made a complete mess of the School. But, having worked in the field another eight years, I gained a great deal of experience the hard way and at my own risk, from which I alone suffered. It was not something which was inflicted upon the country as a whole. When in 1962 I was again invited to take charge of the National School of Drama, I did so. I thought the time was right. It was right for me as well as for the country. And so I took it upon myself as a sort of challenge. I'm very happy to say that I enjoy my work here and I could hardly dream of doing anything apart from this job.

JSAL: Is there any significant difference between audiences in Bombay and Delhi? This is partially self-evident in the fact that you're dealing with the students here instead of with a professional group, as you did in Bombay.

Alkazi: My group in Bombay was not professional. I've always worked a great deal with students. Much of the younger talent which came into The Theater Group came from the colleges. It was something which we tried to make clear to ourselves as well. We frequently went out and worked with colleges, for we felt that we had ultimately to find our talent there. If while the students were in college we provided them with the kind of training which would help them in their work when they eventually came to The Theater Group, they would benefit a great deal. Therefore, as a matter of policy, many of us, I for one, regularly worked with colleges. So did Deryck Jeffereis, Alyque Padamsee, and Sylvester da Cunha. It was because of this that we were able to keep our various organizations going and to encourage in theater fresh blood with new ideas.

You mentioned audiences. In starting this course for The Theater Unit and The Theater Group, my intent was to educate audiences. For example, along with the courses that we started when I first returned from England was a series of exhibitions which we did in the largest exhibition hall in Bombay -- the Jahangir Art Gallery which was then quite new. We did a series of ten exhibitions called "This is Modern Art." We felt that if we were to do anything new or contemporary in the theater, it had to be done in the perspective of the art movement in the country as a whole. I was very closely associated with the painters in Bombay who were a very significant movement at that time: Husain, for example, and Francis Newton Souza, Samanth, Gaitonde, Tayab Mehta, and many more young painters. I was very closely associated with them all; they were very good friends of mine. I often helped them put on and mount their exhibitions, and they came and saw our work. I felt that if we wanted to get an audience which could follow and understand the work that we were doing in the theater, they would also have to be able to follow and understand that which was being turned out by the painters and ultimately by the musicians and so on and so forth. I've always believed in this inter-relationship among the arts and the need, as well, for the artist to be able to communicate with his audience. I felt that in a medium like painting, the artist usually left the means of communication to the painting itself, and was not really prepared to come out and explain his works to the people who came to the gallery; hence, the viewers would be mystified by what they saw. I made it my business, therefore, to explain those works and, in effect, to bring about a greater degree of communication between the pictures on the walls and the audiences. This was a very important factor in creating an atmosphere, a climate in Bombay which was at the time receptive to new ideas. What was constantly needed was somebody to bridge the gulf, and I didn't think it beneath my dignity to do just that. I quite frequently took groups of people around those exhibitions covering the development of Modern Art from Impressionism right down to the present day, right up to Picasso; the following that, the exhibitions showing the impact of Western art on contemporary Indian art. I wanted to demonstrate that contemporary Indian art owed a great deal to its own heritage, as well as to a large number of ideas which came from the world's heritage, and that it was a very important and significant movement in its own right in the country. If we didn't understand that, it would be at our own peril and our own risk.

We also had a series of talks at the end of each one of our productions; for example, we would have a post-mortem where members of the public would be invited to criticize our works. Quite frequently we had questionnaires which we handed out with the programs for people to fill in and tell us what they thought of our productions. In this way we tried to stimulate an active interest in our public concerning theater activity. I wanted the public to have more and more say in what they would like their theater to be. I was very anxious that this theater should become the theater of the public and not merely the hobby of a few enthusiasts who would do whatever they liked, those who would do the latest West End or Broadway hits simply because they had been successful abroad.

Now, you asked about the differences between the audiences in Bombay and Delhi. We had, in the course of several years, slowly built up an audience of something like 3,000 persons who we could be reasonably sure would see any kind of play regardless of style, character, or quality, whether it was a contemporary play of the absurd theater like Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, or an old classic like *Medea*, or a Strindberg play. I tried various devices to make our work more meaningful to these audiences. For example, it was very important for me to have a theater building of my own. We were in the Bhulabhai Institute at the time, but that became extremely difficult, for I found that although on the surface we were very good friends with the owners, deep down we had different intentions altogether about the purposes for which we wanted to use the theater. Therefore, I looked around for a theater, a stage which would be cheap enough and convenient enough for us to stage productions. I discovered one literally on top of my head, on the terrace of the sixth floor of the flat where I was living. I approached the landlord and he was gracious enough to rent out the terrace to me. We built a small theater which would accommodate between 150 and 200 persons who would have to walk up six flights of stairs. Then I said, well, if this theater is going to be meaningful, it must be meaningful to people in its immediate vicintiy. We must cater to audiences within a radius of one mile from here. We should not expect people to come from long distances and cope with problems of parking their cars and so forth, and climbing up my six flights of stairs. Therefore, we started tapping the people in the immediate vicinity. We did things like *Waiting for Godot*, which was an extraordinarily successful production as well. We did *Medea*, which was sold out. We did *Volpone*, and many more as well. I discovered that people were prepared to go anywhere for theater as long as it was exciting. Quite frequently, for example, we were washed out by the rain, but that made no difference to our audiences. They invariably invaded our flat downstairs and had coffee and came on another day to see the show without demanding any refunds for their original tickets. While

I was working in Bombay, I also made it my business to work with a small group in the suburb of Bandra. I taught there twice a week and thought it important to do productions wherever I taught. People, after all, do not want theoretical or practical training for its own sake alone. It's only for the purpose of a production. Actors do want to be seen and producers do want to show their talent. The real test of theater is in its impact on an audience, in the reaction of that audience. Therefore, invariably, my approach has been to work towards a production which is then put on before an audience. I've always found that this has been the most successful approach.

JSAL: Now what about your Delhi audiences?

Alkazi: The audiences in Delhi have changed fantastically in the last five or six years. It's astounding. Delhi was an absolute cultural desert. The only kind of so-called cultural activity which went on here was the occasional production which, say, the high commissions did, high commissions belonging to the diplomatic corps or to different countries. As you know, they had their own select audiences, members of the local bureaucracy or of the diplomatic corps. Invariably these plays would be in English, catering to these limited audiences which naturally acquired a sort of snobbery. This, at the same time, created a certain ill-will among other theater audiences which did not have the same resources. If you do a production for the British High Commission, your budget could run as much as Rs. 12,000 or 15,000, whereas a local group can barely raise Rs. 1,000 for a production of its own. I felt, therefore, that I had to steer clear of all this. If the National School of Drama was going to do something worthwhile, it had to build up its audiences, especially from the Hindi-speaking population, from those primarily interested in indigenous theater. We have been fairly catholic in our selection of plays. The kind of audiences we were anxious to show our plays to were middle-class: the clerks, the office-goers, the small shopkeepers, the types of men whom you see walking down Daryaganj or Paharganj. To begin with, I felt that it was important to reach this middle class because it is a very important factor in Delhi society. It is ambitious; it does not wish to remain where it is; it is not static. It is seeking for ideas and for outlets of expression. If one first finds ways to capture the imagination of the middle class and later on extends to the larger masses in the country, the agricultural and industrial factions -- the peasants and the workers -- if one has a grip on these three different areas, then I think one has really been able to capture the Indian audience. These audiences have been fairly loyal. Any production of the National School of Drama, I think, would now draw a fairly substantial audience of something like 5,000 to 6,000 in Delhi, which is saying a great deal because there's a problem here of communication. By that I mean with busses and trains and so on. There's not much difficulty in getting from one end of Bombay to another, but here it's almost a pilgrimage to go to a play. After all, you've spent your two or three rupees for the play, and still have to wait for at least an hour and a half for a bus, and after the play's over, you wait for another hour and a half to get home. There's no atmosphere. Theaters are located in a kind of wilderness. You come out into complete darkness, surrounded by it. There are no cafes to go to, no restaurants which invite you -- these would also encourage the discussion of the plays and so on. After all, the theater is an activity of metropolitan areas; it gives you the feeling of belonging to the bustle of a large city, to the liveliness and excitement of city life.

JSAL: You mentioned that your group has performed before factory workers. Tell us something about this.

Alkazi: Well, we've tried to give our people as varied a range as we possibly could. It was not enough, we felt, to do plays in our small little theaters here at the School. The one upstairs holds only about eighty persons; the theater downstairs only about three hundred. We felt it was our business to take theater directly to the people. Now, as you know, we always do a classical Indian play a classical Western play, two or three plays by contemporary Indian playwrights whose works have not been done before, and possibly a folk play each year. This constitutes our repertoire at the National School of Drama. We like to take quite a few of these plays to workers. For the last two years we've been taking some of those which we feel would appeal to the workers, and playing them at the Swatantra Bharat Mills where we've had audiences of 5,000 to 6,000 persons. We hope to take some of our other productions to the slums, to the workers' colonies. We perform them on Sunday afternoons for one-and-a-half to two hours. This brings these people entertainment of a fairly high artistic standard, making no concession to what is known as bad public taste. I think the taste of the public on the whole is extremely good and extremely refined. When bad plays are performed, it is not really a concession to the taste of the audiences, but rather a symptom of the vulgarity of their sponsors. The audiences, for example, that we've had for *Hori*, based on Premchand's *Godan*, have consisted of *juggi* [slum]-dwellers, students, teachers from municipal schools -- people who've hardly ever seen a play in their lives.[1] They are a very active sort of audience: they speak right through performances, they make comments while the performance is going on, they anticipate the entrances of the actors, or comment on the reaction of a character to his situation. Frequently they are complimentary as often as they are sarcastic and rude. But we think that this rapport is very important. The behavior of the audience is an indication of their vitality, of their awareness of what is going on. I would like this kind of critical audience to comment throughout the play. I don't think theater is a sacrosanct activity which needs to be seen in hushed silence, its sheer beauty being marred by interruptions from the audience. I don't really think so. Remember Shakespeare's groundlings, and I dare say it would have been extremely difficult in the theater at Epidaurus to keep an audience of twenty thousand people quiet and hushed right through the day. There must have been bawling children all over the place.

JSAL: Could you say something briefly about the National School of Drama, the curriculum particularly.

Alkazi: The National School of Drama provides a three-year course. The first two years cover all aspects of theater. It's a general course. In the third year, students specialize in acting, production, school dramatics, or community drama -- that is, theater in the rural areas. Before they specialize, students go through a general course which includes a very intensive study of dramatic literature, Sanskrit drama, contemporary Indian drama in all fourteen languages, and Western drama from the Greeks right down to the present day, to Brecht, Beckett, Ionesco, and others. Along with the study of theater, there is study in stage techniques, stage design, costume design, lighting, and make-up. Each student would, in the course of a year, do two or three projects where he'd have to design, say, the setting, costumes, lighting, and make-up for a play; in the case of a Greek play, masks would also be required. His next assignment would probably be a Sanskrit play, with a similar approach. In the course of three years, therefore, he would have covered a large number of styles. He would have done at least one classical Indian play, one classical Western play, three or four contemporary Indian plays, one or two historical plays belonging to different periods of Indian history -- for example, one belonging to the Gupta period and one to the Mughal. This would necessitate a complete change in costumes and so on. Then he would probably do a folk play. The kind of assignments that he would be given would also demand that he work in a variety of locales. He would work on a proscenium stage, an arena stage, in the open air under genuine conditions, and in the back lanes, say, of Delhi. Then there's a study of theater architecture, again from the Greek theaters of Epidaurus and Dionysus right down to the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, the Stratford Theatre in Ontario, and the Chichester Theatre, as well as other developments which have taken place in theater architecture on the Continent. The student studies acting, largely through practical experience in plays from among our five major productions. I dare say that in the course of a year a student would get roles in at least three of the five major productions so that in three years he would have been in at least nine or twelve major productions of the School. This is, of course, in addition to the student productions.

Then we come to his specialization in the third year. When he specializes in acting, he does leading roles in plays which are being done by the School. If he specializes in production, he is given a period of three to four weeks in the course of which he puts on a play entirely on his own, along with the other students in the School. This is a part of his graduation requirement, and he passes or fails according to his performance, apart, of course, from the theoretical papers which he has to write in addition. Out of a total of 1,000 points, 300 are reserved for this production. In the school dramatics curriculum, the student would be given a course in children's drama, that is, the use of drama as a means of education in the schools. He would be attached to one of the local schools to see that his work is carried out effectively into practice. There are several changes that we wish to bring about in our method of teaching and our approach. We would like, for example, instead of community drama, to have another specialization which would be just stagecraft. There are people who do not wish to specialize in just acting and who are not good enough, who do not have the intellectual background and the analytical skill which is required of a director or a producer. In this case, the man could be a trained stage technician. He'd specialize in stage design, stage management, lighting, in all the requirements of a stage technician. And since there are, for example, twenty Tagore theaters in this country which are badly equipped and which require skilled technicians, I think these people would serve a very useful purpose.

JSAL: Would you say something about the uniquely Indian problems you've run up against in your work here at the School? Do you, for example, have to fight the traditionally low reputation of theater and theater people, for example?

Alkazi: I don't really think so. I don't think that's very strong. No, I don't think there's much of a prejudice against the theater now, and if there has been, it's been very quickly dispelled. One of the things that naturally prejudices people against the theater is that it is an insecure profession. Parents are not anxious for their children to get into this profession simply because it provides them no security. On the other hand, the kind of security that the average student would get would be that of a clerical job. People's attitudes are very peculiar. They'd much prefer that a young man be secure earning Rs. 110 a month for the next twenty years. In my opinion, he would be much better off earning about Rs. 800-900 a month by fits and starts. Now, for example, we've conducted a survey only this year about students who have left this institution. We discovered that 75%, if not more, are in very well-established jobs. The popular notion that students who graduate from here have trouble getting jobs is a myth. Most of them are earning between Rs. 400 and 1,000. This is extraordinarily good. I mean, for a student in India to get out of an institution and immediately begin to earn that much money is almost incredible. Even in the more established professions such as medicine, architecture, or engineering, a student doesn't do half as well as some of our students are able to do. Of course, the number of students who have been graduating is extremely small. We barely send out twelve or fifteen a year, and many of them hang around Delhi after they leave here. But even here, they've been absorbed, quite a few of them into the Song and Drama Division of All India Radio, though it has only been in existence for the last year or two. Before that, they went into television. They've gone there as producers, assistant producers, floor managers and technicians. I think that in the course of time there will be even more openings available to them than are available at present.

JSAL: What kinds of students do you get? Who are they? Where do they come from?

Alkazi: Most of them are average Indian students from small provincial towns such as Patna, Lucknow, or Ludhiana. Only a few of them, two or three, are from the major cities like Calcutta or Bombay. Theater enthusiasts there have already found a means of employment or expression in the local theater as it already exists, and don't find it necessary to come to the National School of Drama for three years of training. Quite a few of our students are from Delhi. We get students from all over the country. I think in the National School of Drama you have a genuine representation of the various regions in the country as a whole. We have students from Tamilnad, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh. We have a large number of students from Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and the Punjab. We've also got students from Kashmir. Now most of them are graduate students. I prefer to take graduates in the National School of Drama. I feel that this kind of academic preparation is very important, particularly since a fairly high level of intellectual achievement is demanded of students here at the School. For example, only this afternoon we had our students talking with one of the established writers of this country, Upendranath Ashk, completely on his own terms, objectively scrutinizing his play, and being able to talk with him with complete assurance.[2] They were being absolutely objective, fair, respectful, but at the same time, quite critical. Now, to be able to develop that kind of sensibility in a student from this kind of background is extremely difficult. But I think it is necessary for us to do that.

JSAL: Are you committed to any particular school of acting? Do you think that one school of acting is better than another?

Alkazi: I wouldn't say that I'm committed to any one school of acting, no. I'm certainly not committed to the Method school of acting. I want to be extremely strong and firm on that point. I think that that is a highly self-indulgent approach to the theater. If I were to commit myself, I would say that we should strive for an approach such as that of epic theater for several reasons. In the first place, the classical Indian theater itself tends in that direction. It is imbued with a large number of conventions which make that kind of approach not only feasible, but characteristic of, the Indian theater. A large number of these traditions and conventions have filtered down into the folk forms -- the use of music, dance, speech, song, the use of the simplest type of conventions, the use of a type of montage which you have in the epic theater, the breaking up of the flow of the action, the discontinuity of the action, the distancing or the alienation of the spectator from the action on the stage as well as of the actor from his role. All this, I think, is part of the Indian tradition.

For the last 150 years we have erroneously sunk ourselves into the tradition of the theater as it existed in mid-nineteenth century Europe. Whatever you see in the conventional theater in our country today -- by conventional I mean conventional along Western lines -- are things which have merely been picked up third-hand and fourth-hand from rather shabby troupes which traveled this country in the middle of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. It is only now that we are beginning to make a serious study of Western theater. I feel very happy that I have been instrumental in introducing, for example, the Greek theater to this country. I think it strikes a chord in the Indian sensibility. Indians respond immediately to it. *Oedipus Rex* has been one of the most astounding successes in this country. I've done *Medea, Trojan Women,* and others, which have had a great response. We've known the Western theater largely through Shakespeare, and through hackneyed and rather horrifying approaches at that -- again, the conventional nineteenth-century approach. All that we know of the theater of ideas is through Shaw, some of Shaw, not even the most difficult of his plays, and also through Galsworthy. But the true traditions of the Western theater have been denied us because our scholars have not gone beyond the accepted texts which are required for study in the universities.

JSAL: What about the serious study of drama as drama in universities? Drama not as literature, but as drama?

Alkazi: Drama is not studied as drama in our Indian universities, unfortunately. Drama is only studied as literature. And it will be quite some time before the idea of drama as a subject with which a person can graduate at the university level will be accepted, before this prejudice of accepting drama merely as literature will be broken.

JSAL: Which production do you feel has been your most successful? Was it your *Oedipus*?

Alkazi: No, I don't think so. No. It was a highly romantic production and I think that if I were to approach it now I'd do it differently. As one grows older, as one goes along, one -- I hope -- becomes more objective and dispassionate. *Waiting for Godot* was one of my most serious productions in Bombay. I think that Lorca's *Yerma* was successful in many ways, not so much in trying to capture a Spanish flavor, for that was not the main idea. The idea was, in addition, to communicate with Indian audiences coming from a peasant background. I was thrilled to find persons responding to that play and to feel the reactions which a Maharashtrian audience would feel, which a peasant audience would feel, in seeing that play, in seeing the earth, the dust-quality almost, the heat-quality of the play. I think *Trojan Women* was one of the most serious plays I have done. Here I was confronted with a large number of technical and social problems for which I tried to find an artistic as well as a social solution on the stage. *Lear* was also a very serious effort. I don't think that any of these are achievements. You don't often succeed in any of these things. And I don't believe, of course, that the achievement is always commensurate with the effort. You can put in a tremendous amount of effort, but your achievement may be nil. I do think, however, that in addition to the interpretation of the play in itself and its impact on the people working on the production, the effect it has on the audience is important as well. I think that the totality of a production needs to be taken into account, as well as the amount that I myself have learned in producing that play.

JSAL: Tell us about your *Trojan Women*.

Alkazi: Instead of the prologue which, as you know, is the discussion between Athena and Poseidon regarding the return of these people to Greece, which I thought would be rather difficult for our people to take in and understand, I used a set of ten slides. They came from Greek sculpture depicting the horrors of war. Superimposed on them were subtitles explaining the play in very brief words. I told the audience that this was a play which Euripides wrote at such-and-such a time against his own country when it was engaged in imperialist wars. These slides told the audience that it required a great deal of moral courage on the part of a playwright to do so. My idea was, of course, to provoke our own people into doing this kind of thing and to make them realize the need to have a certain social consciousness in working in the theater. When you are doing a Greek play in the theater, you are not necessarily resurrecting Greek life as it was 2500 years ago. It has got to be meaningful, not merely in terms of an esthetic experience, but also in terms of relating that which you see on the stage to the life around you. That was a prologue.

As an epilogue I tried to depict in about ten slides the horrors of war in the last 150 years. I tried to demonstrate this through one of the etchings of Goya from his *Horrors of War*, through pictures of World War I, World War II, of the Indo-Pakistani War. I tried to indicate that the Hecubas and the Astyanaxes and the Andromaches and so on are people whose faces we see every day in the newspapers, either in the shapes of corpses littering the streets, or in the harrowed faces of the women in Vietnam or of the villagers who are surrounded by troops no matter to which side they belong. Unless we can begin to identify those characters from a piece of dramatic literature with characters whom we see in our newspapers every day, I don't think that we will be able to establish the relationship between theater and life.

To that extent, therefore, you provoke and stimulate actors as well as your audience into making active decisions on the political level as well. It's not only a question of emoting. It concerns taking a stand, which few people ever do. We are academics in the worst sense of the word. We are people who live in an ivory tower. We have no sense of responsibility whatsoever. We shrug our shoulders and we take everything in stride. We believe in the law of *karma*, though, which is not a law of inaction but a principle of the greatest responsibility. I feel, therefore, that we need to provoke ourselves into positive action. We need to make choices. In every single thing that one does in the course of the day there are choices. We must stand by them and we must suffer the consequences of our actions. To that extent I feel also that it is necessary to bring the theater more and more in line with what happens in everyday life. I feel it's necessary for work in the theater not merely to be conducted by people who belong to the theater. I feel that we need the coolness, the detachment, the objectivity of other disciplines. When I say, for example, "Why is the Indian drama lagging behind?", it is assumed that the other Indian arts are not lagging behind, that they are well abreast of the times. But I think that we are lagging behind fantastically in terms of, certainly, science, technology and medicine. Now I do realize that those are immediately useful disciplines to the country, particularly a country that is going through a desperate state of evolution and accelerated development from the stone age into the atomic age. In a situation such as this it's even more important for us to come to grips with some of these problems and for us to scrutinize them along with our scientists, technologists, men of medicine, and so on. Therefore, I would really like in the course of our training here to bring these people in and to reduce the training in the technical and artistic aspects of theater and to reduce the study of dramatic literature to about fifty percent, but yet to introduce a scrutiny of these other aspects of our life. At least fifty percent of our studies here should be devoted to that. We should know, even as actors in the theater, the economics of our country, the politics of our country. I do think this social function of the theater is extremely important.

JSAL: Which playwrights whom you have not done would you like most to produce? Do you have a favorite?

Alkazi: Well, it's very difficult to say who one's favorite playwright is, but certainly I think an inexhaustible source is Shakespeare. Absolutely inexhaustible. I think that I've learned far more from him in terms of my work in the theater as a producer, as an actor, and so forth, than from any other single source. Quite honestly, after that I would say Brecht.

I would like to do some of Eugene O'Neill's plays. For example, however strange it may seem to you, a play like *Desire Under the Elms* is extremely meaningful to us over here. I've always been telling Balwant Gargi that this is the kind of play he should write in a Punjab context with a Punjabi background, our own peasant background. Lorca is tremendously important to India. He has all the qualities of earth and fire and sun, but he also has been able to bring in all this realism and a very heightened type of poetry in the theater. That is something to which the Indian sensibility would respond immediately. I tend to move away from the purely psychological play. That is why a play like *Desire Under the Elms* appeals to me so much. The social background is so important to it. The psychological situations are tremendously interesting in themselves. There's this business of generations, of people who belong to different social backgrounds, and so on. There's this entire Puritan background of Ephraim Cabot's which is sort of symbolized by the rather stark environment which he inhabits, the land which he tills and the severity of the conditions.

JSAL: Is Eugene O'Neill done in India at all?

Alkazi: Hardly ever, no. To a certain extent it is partly because of the language. This is part of the difficulty as well with a person like Arthur Miller. To a certain extent, the American accent would be essential to *Death of a Salesman*. Perhaps a little less for *A View from the Bridge*, which I have done.

JSAL: Which is your favorite American play?

Alkazi: I think *Streetcar Named Desire*. There's a quality of poetry about that play which is fantastic. And more than anything else, I think more than the play itself, just the description of the place in New Orleans to which Blanche comes, is absolutely fantastic. That's the very first page of the play! Somehow if one can capture that atmosphere and exude it through the setting you have the entire meaning of the play made explicit through the smells and the atmosphere. Unfortunately, of course, Williams has gotten more and more into a sensational and romantic vein. I think he's a man of extraordinary talent. Is it your society which destroys such talent? Look at the extraordinary talent of Albee: it's barely started to flower when it's destroyed!

JSAL: What would be the difference in approach, say, in producing a modern Indian play and a classical Sanskrit play? Or a modern Western play in Hindi translation and a classical Sanskrit play? Would you, for example, edit out seemingly unnecessary parts of a Sanskrit play -- "transcreate" it, to use the currently fashionalbe term?

Alkazi: I try, as far as possible, to understand in the course of a production the social situation out of which the play grows, the social ambience, the events, the conditions, the relationships between the classes, the emergence of certain types. For instance, if you're doing a Restoration play, you need to know the situation, the social conditions out of which the Beau emerged. Who is the beau? What class of society does he belong to? Why does he lead this particular sort of life, where, on the one hand, he's chasing after women madly -- I mean it's a fantastic dog's game that he's involved in -- and on the other, he's always chasing around for some inheritance or another? There's almost an hysterical quality in the passion with which he's obsessed. The distinction between the people who live in the country and the people who live in the town seems to be so great. It always seems to be that the people who live in the country are anxious to gravitate to the town almost like moths wanting to burn themselves in the fire. This kind of lascivious comedy was being written for the stage in England and this kind of theatrical experience also became part and parcel of the lives of the people. They constantly talk about it in their coffee houses and their drawing rooms, in their lovers' boudoirs, and so on -- the references are invariably to what is happening on the stage. This seems to be an integral part of the lives of the people, and the stage seems to reflect the lives of the people. You have these same people completely sodden with drink; the references to disease are fantastic -- everybody seems to be suffering from the pox, and everybody seems to end up somehow or another either in the poor house or in prison, or involved in debt, or in running off overseas, or joining the army. Then you have these triumphant wars of Marlborough which are taking place on the Continent.

It is within the context of this entire situation that you have to see this Restoration play. Unless one can understand this, one can only do a Restoration play merely as a sort of lark, a most enjoyable lark, as a battle of wits where people are embarked on their various strategems and devices to outwit each other, both through their speech, and through their actions. But what is far more interesting is to try and bring to the surface the kind of society which, later on, Hogarth was to spend his entire life depicting in his works.

Now when we do a Greek play, for example, it's not enough to bring out the mystification, or the element of fate, or of personal destiny, or of personal aggrandizement, or of dignity and integrity, but to investigate Greek society, to understand, for example, the contradiction of Greek democracy also being a slave society. Unless one is able to understand these contradictions and to see to what extent they are reflected in their dramatic expression, and unless one is able through that understanding to recreate that social background, all that one gives on the stage is the demonstration of an abstract idea. That is not sufficient. It's not sufficient to deal in abstraction on the stage because it becomes only one-dimensional. This is one of the things which makes the psychological play relatively uninteresting. After all, a psychological play can be a series of intellectual games. You can create all sorts of situations and you can get all sorts of psychological reactions, complexities, and involvements. There's a great deal of freedom for the playwright to develop the labyrinthine ways in which the human psyche responds to certain situations. But in addition to that, it is within the matrix of a certain social framework and the psychological situation within that social framework which is really interesting. This is an age where the psychological identities of millions of human beings have been completely ignored, where they have been reduced to an anonymous mass through mass societies -- one doesn't recollect the names of six million Jews who have been massacred by the Germans; one does not even know their identities; they've just become a mass of spectacles or of false teeth or watches in buckets, or a pile of shoes. Therefore, where does the element of psychology come in there? Where is the psychological significance?

There are much greater forces at work today, and these need to be articulated on the stage. Now this is not true only today. While these Restoration plays were being written at the time of Queen Anne, the chaos that existed there was something which is depicted in the works of Hogarth. If you look at his paintings and his drawings, you will be astounded by the feeling of absolute chaos, by the manner in which people are tearing one another apart. For example, the chaos in the streets, the chaos in the homes, the upturned furniture. In *The Lord Mayor's Procession* we see the chaos which was produced in the streets as this magnificent personality, the Lord Mayor, goes through London -- things are falling apart. Even in such a thing as *Beer Street*, rather than sensing solemnity and solidity, you get the picture of everything falling apart. That is the sort of social force which needs to be depicted in your Restoration play if you are going to produce it. Therefore, the technical aspect of how to do it on the stage is a very simple matter. But it can only be defined to the extent to which you are able to bring in this kind of understanding of the times as they are reflected in the play. For example, we have these two characters in Farquhar's *The Beaux' Strategem*. One of them is Aimwell, the other, Archer. They can very easily be played as similar characters. But if you scrutinize them carefully, you find that they are not just two beaux. It's not simply a strategem of two beaux. They are two completely separate personalities. Archer is a person who belongs to an inferior social class. Aimwell belongs to a fairly well-to-do and perhaps aristocratic family -- I'm not sure. You have in Archer a complete go-getter. He is a philanderer. He's a man who would do anything, who would be prepared to rape and to cut somebody's throat, and wouldn't bat an eyelid. Now you see the parallel development of this man along with Aimwell, who is harmless, innocuous; he is not really a rake. He's a man who will chase after women but, really, only for the fun of it and not through that obsession for money that Archer displays to a fantastic degree. Archer would hardly distinguish between a kitchen maid and a countess. We need to find out what it was, what particular urge, that created this kind of trickster, this kind of philanderer, this rascally character who established himself in society and became an accepted member of that society.

As for the Sanskrit plays, I wouldn't perform them in English. They lose a great deal in English. Even performing them in Hindi, I think they lose a great deal. That, of course, is inevitable, but they do not lose as much in Hindi as they do in English. I think it would be completely wrong to cut out things such as the invocation, as some translators, or "transcreators" as they call themselves, have done. I think there is a certain conventional form which it is very important to maintain, to preserve. It not merely creates an aura or an atmosphere; it is part of the essential form of the play. For example, it is true that if you were going to write a symphony today, you might not write it as Beethoven would have. But if you were to recreate a Beethoven symphony, you couldn't do it without the movements. The invocation is an essential part of a Sanskrit play. It is completely irrelevant whether your Western audiences understand it or not. And it is really irrelevant whether the Sanskrit play should be made meaningful to the Western audience. It would be really ridiculous for me to cut out the chorus of a Greek play if I felt it was unimportant.

If, for example, you were to do a Sanskrit play in America, and were to succeed in doing the invocation as it is meant to be done in Sanskrit, possibly even only in the form of a recording, I think the mere sounds of those words would communicate the meaning of a Sanskrit play to the audience, even if they didn't understand the words. I think it should be tried. Do a Sanskrit play in English that has only the invocation in Sanskrit; it suggests the sound of the original; it is able to create for you the kind of atmosphere that is immediately exuded by the play, the calmness and serenity of mind which the play demands. If you take the invocation as a preliminary stage to the appreciation of the whole drama, you would have to accept it as an inextricable part of the whole play. I don't think that you would find it so difficult to communicate it to an American audience. You know, I've done *Śakuntala* in Sanskrit and it was only then that the whole beauty of Sanskrit drama was revealed to me. This was about four years ago.

JSAL: Where do you find students to play in these?

Alkazi: Oh, there are students in India who can do plays in Sanskrit. I can easily get people here. I got students speaking in Sanskrit only from one region in India. They were all Maharashtrians, and so they had the same accent in Sanskrit. You can get people speaking Sanskrit from South India, you know, from Benaras, from Uttar Pradesh and so on. Each one would speak in a different accent. But since I had them all from one region, they all spoke with a very refined accent because Marathi is very close to Sanskrit. It was actually a revelation to me regarding the beauty of the language, its texture and richness.

JSAL: Are the vernacular plays more easily produced in India than English language plays?

Alkazi: Yes, I think there would be a greater appeal, by and large, to a play in any one of the vernacular languages than to one in English. Your audiences for English plays would be extremely limited. Also, you'd only have audiences for English plays in the major towns -- in Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi -- and you'd find that you would be seeing the same people again and again at your shows.

JSAL: And in this context, as you've said before, you make no concessions in a given performance not only to English, but say, to Greek drama.

Alkazi: No, I've never felt that need, really. This is one of the things foreign directors and the like have discovered when they've come here to do either plays or musical works. They always imagine that they need to water things down. They underestimate the Indian audience. A few years the Oxford Playhouse came with Shaw's *The Man of Destiny*, Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*, and *Twelfth Night*. The most successful of them was *The Cocktail Party*. It was not Shaw or Shakespeare, but what seemed to be the most difficult play. Very recently when Prospect Productions came with, again, Shaw -- *Misalliance* -- and Pinter's *The Birthday Party*; it was *The Birthday Party*, really, which caught on and not *Misalliance*. There would be no difficulty whatsoever in audiences here understanding *Waiting for Godot*. None. Not at all. We couldn't understand the "hoohah" that went on in England when the play was first produced there. We couldn't understand why people found it incomprehensible. I teach it year after year to my classes and it is immediately comprehensible to our audiences, to our students. So is Ionesco. *The Caretaker*, for example, is one of the most popular plays here -- in Hindi, I might add.

JSAL: Haven't you been affected by the prevalent anti-British sentiment in terms of the number of productions you do?

Alkazi: No, not at all.

JSAL: What do you think about this anti-English sentiment? Now you are obviously committed to Hindi. As early as 1951 you started Hindi theater. You are of the opinion, I gather, that English is on its way out.

Alkazi: Yes. As I said before, I would use English for what it is worth, for its utilitarian purposes. A great deal of what is being published abroad comes out in English. In order to keep abreast of the times, in order to be aware of what is going on in the rest of the world, we need to know English. We've been encouraging both. We've been encouraging everything. We've been encouraging the study of Hindi here in the School. We sometimes have special classes for students who are behind in Hindi. We also encourage the further study of the other vernaculars. For example, in our speech or acting classes, whenever there have been plays in any one of the vernacular languages for which we have a sufficient number of students from that region, we've produced that play in the regional language. We've produced plays in Marathi, and folk dramas in Punjabi, Hindi and Marathi. In addition, we encourage each student to study the literature of his own region. What is taught in the speech classes, then, is the more significant contemporary works, for example, of a poet and the most significant classical heritage of that region. We feel that it is very, very important for our students to go back home after their training having a much sounder knowledge of their own vernacular literature, a fairly good knowledge of Hindi, and an idea of what has been done in Hindi so that they have a national outlook.

By also attending the various classes and performances, they come to know what is happening in other regions as well. They come to know, for example, who the significant playwrights are. Students from Maharashtra would know the Bengali playwrights and poets, the people who are writing in Tamil now, the writers from Kerala, and the rest. Through having our students translate major works from their own regional languages to other regional languages, we are trying to establish a sort of national integration, which is succeeding extremely well. There are prejudices which provoke such comments as, "Oh, the theater is strong only in Bengal and Maharashtra. Nothing is being written except by Bengalis and Maharashtrians." Through our work here at the School, such myths are exploded, and very quickly. You get someone who knows Malayalam and the plays of that language; he translates them into Hindi, and you say, "Oh my God, I didn't realize there were so many plays." You get Girish Karnad coming out with three or four plays in Kannada, and before him, Adya Rangacharya had written sixty or seventy plays in Kannada which weren't known because the language wasn't widely known.[3]

JSAL: Translating is such an overpowering task, though.

Alkazi: It's tremendous. It's extremely exciting. Quite frequently, for example, we have public readings. It's very simple. For example, for Marathi poetry we usually have the original poem read by Marathi-speaking students. We have translations in Hindi either read immediately afterward or even before. We frequently have the translations read before so that the audience will understand what the poem is about and can then follow the sound patterns and see what has been made of that idea by the poet in his own language. In this way, I think, by opening up our students and the public to these experiences, ignorance and prejudice are countered. The moment you bring in a certain amount of enlightenment, all these prejudices begin to disappear. Television and radio could do a tremendous amount to enlighten, you know; schools and colleges as well. Wherever you go in India, writers will be abashed and talk to you in terms that show their inferiority complexes. They will say that there are no plays at all written in the country. There are scores of writers of the eminence and quality of J. P. Priestly or Terence Rattigan. Certainly! Any number of them! There is some extraordinary talent in the regional languages. They're just not known, only because no one Indian knows several other Indian languages. I think I'm very fortunate to be here in Delhi and to get the opportunity, through these translations and through my associations with my students, to come to know what is being done. It's amazing.

Another thing is that we are fortunate over here that we can have these people come directly to Delhi. We can have the finest writers come to us, talk to us, discuss with us. We can invite them to our institution as we have done with several writers. We say: "Come and see the rehearsals of your play. Come and see the performance, come and see the impact on the audience, come and see the reaction, the response of the audience to those plays; discuss the production with us and with our producers, etc." It's a tremendously rewarding experience for them. Then we pay them a fairly substantial royalty. When, occasionally, a man begins to receive royalties from a production, it's very rewarding.

JSAL: What about censorship in the Indian stage? Do you have any problems with that at all?

Alkazi: We used to have problems in Bombay. This is a legacy which we inherited -- supposedly -- from the British. We are supposed to have inherited everything bad from the British. Well, censorship was one of those things. I mean, you had to go to the Arms and Ammunition Department to get your plays approved. It's funny, I know, but frequently during the days of the British, many of these plays which had been written in the vernacular were really political plays -- anti-British plays under a guise -- and naturally the British wanted to put a stop to this. One would have thought that immediately after independence all this would have been scrapped. On the contrary, we've tended to be even more puritanical and even less permissive than the British were. It's because our people are just too short-sighted; that's why censorship differs from state to state. In Bombay you would even now, if I'm not mistaken, have to send about six to ten scripts to different members of the censor board. They eventually go through your scripts and cut out passages which they think would not be in the best public interest.

JSAL: Political passages?

Alkazi: No. Most of them are sexual -- stupid little things like kissing or drinking on the stage. I think they are much more permissive now than they were in my days. I remember that I had to go to the police and every single page of every script had to be stamped by the police officer, and I had to countersign any changes. Although one countersigned all those changes, one invariably didn't abide by them when the play was presented on the stage.

JSAL: Were you ever involved in anything whereby you were taken to task for this?

Alkazi: No, not really. There's no such censorship here in Delhi. There's been no such problem at all. You know, most of the plays that are done here are fairly tepid and lukewarm. There's hardly anything which would really upset anyone. They're hardly provocative or iconclastic in any way, so it's not a great achievement.

JSAL: Did you ever think of trying one such play?

Alkazi: I think so, yes. I wouldn't be interested in nudism. Nudism on the stage may be all very well over there, but here in India we've got nudism on the streets. To see the nude bottom of Marat, for example. getting out of his tub -- it would be all very well over there. And of course, it's perfectly all right to see it in the streets over here, but a completely different thing to see it in the theater. That which you take for granted over here becomes a type of voyeurism when you have it on the stage. I don't think these are a part of the essential liberties which are required by the theater. I don't think, for example, that if Marat wore short panties, it would make any difference in the production. Not at all. I think these are gimmicks. I notice again and again in contemporary films abroad that there's a type of playing, a deliberate provoking of the voyeur instinct in human beings by presenting odd and lascivious glimpses of the female form in completely incongruous situations. I think such things are stupid. If they were really meant for a specific artistic purpose, if they were an essential part of the dramatic action, I could understand.

JSAL: You have spoken of the social function of drama and also of the static and passive attitudes of the creative artist. You stated that the thinking of the country -- India, the United States, it makes no difference -- is being done by the politicians. But what if artists do speak out? Take, for example, Robert Lowell, Norman Mailer, and other such writers speaking out against the Vietnam War. Who's listening? Is there really any difference between reactions to artists who are passive and static and to artists who are aggressive and active?

Alkazi: But you see what has happened now? There is obviously a gulf between your society and your creative artists and writers. Obviously your society is ready to accept its creative writers and artists in their own field of expression. They're not prepared to accept them when their ideas become demonstrated in action. This has always been the case. What shall I say? I don't want to say, "That's how it is in a bourgeois society." I don't want to use the typical communist or Marxist jargon. I don't want to fall into that trap. What I mean is that you invariably find that the world is being run by politicians and that the artists and the writers have had very little power in helping to shape it. But a great deal has changed. The monarchy doesn't exist at all. You've had democracy. More and more you are having a great deal of power coming down to larger and larger masses of people. And invariably now, no matter what part of the world you go to, the democratic ideal, the ideal of the largest number of people having their say in the government and expressing themselves, and seeing that their ideas are articulated through their spokesmen to the government, is taken for granted. It's here, therefore, that that which may have been historically true regarding the artist in the past need not any longer be true today. I think the scientist and the technologist and the artist can get together and can bring a tremendous amount of pressure on the politicians to bring about changes in attitudes. What has tended to happen is that, though we've had a dispassionate approach in intellectual matters, in ideas of nationalism and so forth, we're still where we always were: we're still behind in our thinking. We're advanced scientifically. In our methods of thinking, we don't accept any barriers. But we certainly accept national barriers, barriers between countries or ideologies. If, for example, the technologists of the world were to get together and the creative people in the world were to get together, there'd be no problem.

What you have in the United Nations is a congregation of politicians. Even as they are trying to make a world suitable for everyone to live in with a considerable degree of happiness, you do not have a gathering of the creative people, of scientists and technologists. If you had a United Nations of that sort, I think there would be far fewer problems in the world, because the world would then be considered as one unit. Indeed, in the course of, I daresay, the next twenty or thirty years, all our ideas of these kinds of national barriers will be considered obsolete, as a relic of feudal times. We have so much of the medieval and of the feudal in our thinking. It has taken a great deal of time to get rid of those elements, but we've been able to do far more in the last fifty years than we've been able to do in the last four thousand. To that extent, this kind of acceleration will come along. We're going to get this acceleration now because we have a younger generation which will no longer accept these things. The kind of protests against Vietnam which have come along are supported not only by the writers and the intellectuals, but by young people who have essentially nothing to do with the war, who are not even remotely connected with the last World War, but are aware not of -- what shall I say -- not a philosophy, but a new way of living, an attitude, a mentality. Therefore, I think the Beatles and your hippies are all part of a very important phenomenon. The fact is that they are passive. The fact is that they are gentle. They have no fascist tendencies. They are not violent. On the contrary, they tend to go almost by instinct in the other direction. You have a conflict of generations, not merely of ideologies. Even in East Germany you get your Beatles and your hippies. Therefore, the kind of confrontation that you're going to get is between two completely different attitudes and minds.

JSAL: But in other respect, didn't you get that in America, say, in the twenties?

Alkazi: Oh, I don't think you got it to the same extent. I think it's very, very significant. The whole way of thinking has changed now. For example, your younger generation has taken over and that is, unfortunately, not what has happened over here in India. We are only beginning to see the dimensions of it now. Either the younger generation will explode in a violent manner, or it will take over and it will bury its ancestors -- thank God! But we are really an archaic society. We are a society of doddering old idiots, and it's time we buried them. That is the first impression that you get when you come into this country, and it's a wrong picture altogether, one which is going to change. Unless the politicians make certain changes, the people themselves will. Take the fashions which are being set abroad now. It is the young people who have set the fashions. It is not the young man who begins to get into his father's clothing -- mentally or otherwise. Not at all. On the contrary, it is the father who tries to get into the pants of his young beatnik son. There's been a complete reversal of positions and attitudes. That's fine. That's marvelous.

JSAL: Well, what about some of the traditional answers that the older generation would give about, say, the experience needed for running the country, writing plays, etc.?

Alkazi: I don't think that that kind of experience is something that comes from tradition. I think, for example, that if you destroyed all the museums, if all your paintings were destroyed, if all your dances were dead today, it would not be impossible to start all over again. I do not think that your traditions would die merely because of that. That is only one way of maintaining your hold on and insisting on traditional attitudes. I don't think experience is a matter of age. As a matter of fact, the mess that has been made of the world has been made by people over sixty-five. The traditional Indian attitude would be that, having fulfilled yourself in your life, you retire. You go to the damned forest and leave the world alone. The world can easily look after itself. When the British and French had to leave Africa, they said, "Oh my God, what's going to happen to those black people over there? They're going to make a mess of their country. Who's going to educate them? What experience have they got? The Egyptians will never be able to man the Suez Canal. They will make an awful mess of the thing, you see." And prior to the Six-Day War, they had been able to man it much more efficiently than the British ever did for half a century before.

JSAL: One of the complaints levelled against the professional theater in India is that of standards. Some playwrights feel that the standards set by professional theaters are Western and in no way reflect true "Indian" standards. What are your reactions to this contention?

Alkazi: For heaven's sake, there are no standards at all in the professional theater in this country! And if there are standards, they're absolutely pathetic. They're standards which have to be destroyed. There are about four professional theaters in Calcutta, a few others in Bombay and in some parts of Maharashtra. What kind of standards are we talking about? Are we talking about intellectual standards, artistic standards, technical standards at any level? The professional theater has no set standards; it is completely obsolete and out of tune with the times. I'm sorry, but it makes no contribution at all except as a pathetic type of entertainment. And the Indian masses are hungry for any type of entertainment. You can have a man out there on the street with a monkey doing tricks and you'll have an enormous crowd around him for the simple reason that there is no entertainment other than that. And it's almost free. But you must not judge the quality or standards which exist in these theaters merely by their mass appeal. There are no standards. None whatsoever. There are certain standards in the traditional forms of the dance: in Bhārata Nāṭyam, in Kathakaḷi, in Manipuri. There are the highest standards in Indian music, both in North and South India. But there are, comparatively speaking, no standards in Indian theater at that level. The professional theater, as it exists now, is finished. It cannot possibly make any contribution to the theater movement in the country.

JSAL: Let's talk about intellectual standards. Some writers have contended that if a playwright expressed his particular feelings, emotions, his play would not be produced because it didn't parallel those feelings and emotions brought in from the West. If a play is not up to the standards either of a mass audience or a very sophisticated audience, it won't be produced. In other words, a dramatist may be very romantic, very effusive, very much in the line of Tagore. The producer, however, may feel that this play is no longer relevant and for that reason won't produce it. Yet the play is a legitimate expression of the author's feelings and endeavors. It may reflect his thinking, yet he cannot find a producer for it because it's not up to, say, a *Godot.*

Alkazi: Oh, I see. But then, of course, the theater is always contemporary. It must be meaningful to a contemporary audience. Either the play itself must be able to breach the passage of time, or it must make its appeal to the contemporary sensibility, or the producer in his interpretation of the play must make it meaningful to the contemporary audience. It would be wrong, for example, for a producer, merely in order to be true to a playwright with ideas and sentiments that were fashionable about twenty or thirty years ago, to produce it in a style which would reflect those outdated attitudes and emotions. For example, our students have been discussing with Ashk his play called *Qaid-i-hayāt*, or *Prison of Life*. People are really prisoners of life caught in by their environment, personal situations, etc. They are imprisoned in them and can't break out of them. Quite frequently our students, when discussing his characters with him, use the word "loneliness," and they talk about isolation and the inability of one character to communicate with another. Mr. Ashk keeps saying, "But you see, 'loneliness' is a new term. It is not something which was known in 1942 when I wrote the play." Well, quite apparently, it was not. But the word "loneliness" is something which is very important to people today and very significant. And if the play is to have any significance to people today, it's got to be in terms of the loneliness that people can understand today. No one can understand the play in the context of 1942 when people were going to jail. The idea of people being imprisoned could be made parabolic in an experience which may be depicted on the stage. But for him to say that because the idea of imprisonment was something that was *au fait*, that was accepted in 1942 and that we should maintain that 1942 attitude, is wrong because then he loses communication with his audience.

I think, then, that the kind of reflection that you have in your audience is your youth. The kind of audience to which it is most important to play is your young people, not the audience of middle-age people who are established in their views and who want nothing but established values depicted on stage, wrapped in cellophane, presented in the most attractive way. You need people who are going to be provocative, who are going to be stimulating. That is why the gauge of a stimulating audience is the young people within it.

JSAL: Well, then, what about the allegation regarding the supposed emphasis on urban theater at the expense of rural theater? Now, from what I can gather from all the research that is going on here, and from your comments to your students about folk theater and the like, you're certainly not neglecting the folk art or folk theater and the like. But is it, in fact, true that all the attention is being lavished upon the urban theater?

Alkazi: Now, I don't really know. For example, if we talk about the folk theater, we must also talk about the environment it relates to. Certainly the folk theater is very exciting. It has many exciting forms and conventions which are being used. It would be very interesting for us to do some of our productions in the folk tradition. But if you were to take any accepted writer in the country, if you were to take the late Mohan Rakesh or Adya Rangacharya or Ashk or Karnad or any established Indian writer who has been writing plays in the course of the last twenty or thirty years, not a single one of them has used any of the folk traditions in his plays.[4] Not a single one of them! Of course, it has been said that Tagore occasionally used the folk poems of Bengal, but in an extremely limited manner so that if you were really to look at the plays, you would say that they're conventional and not really very much different from conventional symbolic Western plays. In approaching the folk theater, one must be detached and scientific. We need to understand this particular form in its social context. In what way is it indigenous to a particular region? Is it merely a question of utilizing particular conventions in that folk form when bringing it to an urban stage and to an urban context?

Take the Tamāshā for example, the most exciting type that I have seen so far. One Bombay director used it in order to put across a contemporary theme: the problem of the man who comes from the village and who settles in an urban society, a millworker in Bombay whose roots are really in his village and who has for the greater part of his life had to live away from his wife and family. He lives off the pavements in Bombay under the pressures and tensions of life in the city. Now this theme has been put across in the Tamāshā form with a great many references to politics, to society, to social conditions from a satiric point of view. This approach is certainly tremendously exciting. I can understand that. If that is how we are going to use the forms, then fine. We are stimulated either by the music in these folk forms or the quality of the singing, and to a certain extent by the rhetorical manner of delivery and speech in these forms. Fine. But if we are stimulated by the form, then their content has got to be changed. We've got to get away from the mythological plays and the pure legends and the romantic stories with which they are invariably concerned and begin to use these forms with a new content. And that is where your intellectuals, your contemporary writers have to step in. They have to be thrilled by these forms. They have to be provoked not so much by a Beckett, for example, but by a Nauṭankī, not so much by an Ionesco but by the Tamāshā form. And it is those people who can do it. They expect too much from us. An institution cannot really utilize a folk form. A creative writer can. Of course, we can stimulate and that is what we intend to do. In scrutinizing these folk forms, in doing some of the plays in these folk forms, we hope to stimulate writers, contemporary Indian playwrights, who will express contemporary visions through these forms. This is not yet being done. It has to be done, as I said, by a single playwright. It can't be done by a producer. I need a script! It's as simple as that. I can take an established Nauṭankī; I can take the script and I can get the musicians and the dancers, etc., and I can put on a Nauṭankī performance. But it wouldn't be interesting. I need to use a Nauṭankī form to put across a contemporary content, a play which is going to be of contemporary significance. Therefore, I need a writer. I can't write a play and put it in the Nauṭankī style. I need a writer to do that. Therefore, the creative writers have to be stimulated to using these folk forms.

JSAL: Well, what about a corollary to this, the use of mythological material in a modern context? For example, treating Ravana as a hero in Rāmlīlā.

Alkazi: Yes, the people in the South do that. I think that's fine. By all means. If we are going to treat these myths and things not merely as very important arch-types, but as part of the collective unconscious of our country and resurrect them or re-investigate them in a contemporary context, that really would be exciting. But we tend again and again to dress them up in a theatrical manner. There's been a whole tradition now as to how some of these mythological characters should be done. Those traditions have not really come from authentic Indian tradition, but from the worst and the cheapest and the most tawdry forms of nineteenth century actor-manager companies which went around the country. The satin and the tinsel and all that gaudiness has come in and replaced the indigenous bamboo and gold which were used, for example, in the Yakṣagāna headdresses and in various other forms. Or as another example, Bombay-style Rāmlīlā productions. We will not accept this as authentically Indian. Let me tell you a very simple thing as an example. At one time, dancers came here from Andhra Pradesh to perform Kuchapuḍi. I was asked by the then-secretary of the Sangeet Natak Akademi to help them with their costumes and to see to it that they got better costumes than the ones they normally used, and also to see that the make-up they used was not the horrendous kind of powder which they almost make into a paste and cover their faces with. The amount of trouble that I had even with their manager to persuade him that he should not allow his players to appear like that! To my horror I discovered that each actor was equipped with an enormous box of talcum powder which each started spraying all over his face. And it became an almost impossible task to have them wipe it off their faces. But I insisted and the man was absolutely furious. He said, "Do you want our people to come up there looking like Rajasthani dacoits?" I answered, "What are you trying to pretend to be, an Englishman or something?" It's fantastic! But these are some of the things that will happen. These are also things that we've inherited from the missionaries. Even in my childhood I used to see Indian women in saris whose faces were completely covered with powder. It was a kind of disgust with black skin which the female missionaries had introduced among Indian converts. It was fantastic. These were the people who eventually joined the Salvation Army; they inherited this prejudice. They wanted to become memsahabs. Though you wore your sari, you could then become a memsahab.

JSAL: This is not necessarily brought in by the missionaries. It dates back to the Aryan invasion.

Alkazi: Well, that is quite true. We've had our color prejudices, though we pretend that we do not. You read the matrimonial columns in *The Hindustan Times*, they're always interested in fair-complexioned brides. And the perjorative reference is constantly made to a "person of dark skin" even among these so-called enlightened communities.

JSAL: Have you had any other problems in that respect?

Alkazi: I've not had any problems. None whatsoever. I think if you're fairly firm about this, if you're absolutely strong, and if at the same time you use reason and not merely emotion, I see no problem at all. Not at all. I've never encountered any such problems.

JSAL: In speaking about problems in the Indian theater, what do you feel is the greatest single problem facing Indian theater today?

Alkazi: It's very difficult to pinpoint one specific problem, but as I work in the field what strikes me with particular sharpness is the absence of any professional standard, the absence of criteria by which works are judged. I don't mean just by the critics, but by the playwrights themselves, by the people who work in the theater, the producers, the actors. The absence of a continuous tradition naturally creates this type of vacuum. If there'd been a large number of groups working for many years -- say, continuously for forty or fifty or sixty years -- then through the continuity of that tradition certain standards would be established. The criteria by which plays are judged are by any token outdated. You still have even some of the most distinguished writers applying literary values of the nineteenth century to the discussion of plays written in the sixties of this century. You have teachers and professors of literature holding forth on the drama and on theater. You have standards which, for example, prevail in what might be called conventional types of theater in Maharashtra or in Bengal; these are regarded as the established professional standards, whereas to my way of thinking, anybody who has to do any sort of self-respecting work in theater today has got to cut himself away completely not only from that type of esthetic in the theater, but from the very mental attitude that brings that theater into being.

Therefore, when one is working in the theater, the unhappy thing is that one is not working side-by-side and along with a large number of professional people in the field who are, in turn, supported by a host of semi-professional and amateur workers whose aim it is to do the most exciting contemporary plays, classical plays, plays belonging both to the tradition of this country as well as perhaps plays of universal significance from abroad, in a manner which one could consider to be not necessarily avant-garde, but fresh, exciting, stimulating, meaningful to a fairly intelligent person today. This is, however, not the case. I've done plays in Bombay as long ago as 1950 and 1951, and even perhaps earlier, where the type of plays that pass for experiments today would have already been considered old-fashioned. I've done plays without any sets at all. I've done plays that depended a great deal upon mime and depended a great deal as well upon the imaginations of the audiences. I've done plays under the most severe conventions which might perhaps even upset a sophisticated Western audience. But I've found an innocence and a quality of imagination in Indian audiences; by that I mean the ordinary man in the street is prepared to go along with the production to fantastic lengths. There has been, I think, a type of intellectual lethargy and stagnation with many of us who have been working in the theater. We have been forced for many years to establish our own standards and to judge ourselves by our own criteria -- criteria which are at cross-purposes with those demanded by the critics or with that attitude which prevails among a large number of theater workers. For example, there's a considerable amount of incipient talent in playwriting. There are the makings of a fairly good playwright in a person like Romesh Mehta. This young man has been writing satiric plays of the contemporary Indian scene for the last several years. Unfortunately, he's never really been able to come into his own because he's never really been guided by mature and sensible criticism. Therefore, he will continue to be at the same stage of development that he was at fifteen years ago, not for want of intelligent appreciation, but for want of intelligent appraisal of his work. Now in a situation where the demands would have been greater, stronger, more acute, more critical, and more objective, it would have been possible for such talent to have been tempered into something of true significance. Eventually this young playwright would have been able to contribute something truly worthwhile to the Indian theatrical scene. As it is now, he will remain a secondary talent and will never be able to go beyond his limitations, beyond the steep walls of the rut into which he has slowly, year by year, more and more deeply sunk himself. The playwrights like Adya Rangacharya, for example, in Kannada have been their own guides. Very few people bothered to read their works when they first came out, if they did come out in print at all. The few people who responded to them may have been an extremely small circle; Adya Rangacharya particularly is not a man with a wide social circle, either of admirers of friends. He has had to plow a lonely furrow. And strangely enough, it is only through the translation of his Kannada plays into Hindi that he has been able to acquire an audience even for his plays which are now produced in Kannada. It's a great pity that a man almost in his sixties should, suddenly at the tail end of his literary career, find the kind of audience which should really have been his in the early stages. Had there been standards in criticism, in production, in acting, the criteria which would be common to the country as a whole -- these would have led to something fruitful by this time.

JSAL: Do you think that films have anything to do with holding back the development of these standards?

Alkazi: It is true that the films, by and large, are a form of escape for the masses in this country. After all, we have very little in the way of entertainment. We have a dreary existence in the villages and the small provincial towns. There is hardly anything more in the larger cities. As you know, it's a sort of industry. It's a business which purveys entertainment at its cheapest and at its shoddiest to large masses of people. It's invested in by producers and financiers, many of whom are avowedly illiterate themselves and have very little interest in the medium except to the extent that it can yield financial results. Of course, you have some distinguished people in the field, in the film world, who have tried to reform the movement even before Satyajit Ray came onto the scene.[5] And there were companies like the Bombay Talkies, for example, which, I think in the late thirties and forties put on some remarkable, sensible and intelligent films, in very good taste, which at that time did succeed in influencing behavior among the people, bringing to light human relationships and social problems. Unfortunately, however, the entire movement has since lost its élan, its idealism. That was during the freedom movement; perhaps to a certain extent the same sense of idealism, the same sense of sacrifice, the sense of devotion to a cause and to an ideal which infused the freedom movement in politics was carried over into films and to the various art forms. That has been lost and has been supplanted by a type of cynicism, bitter resentment, frustration and callousness of the worst order. A person like Satyajit Ray is, of course, extraordinary in his achievements in the film world. But as you know, he finds it extremely difficult to find the money now to make his films, even though he's an international figure.

JSAL: Then you would say that, in some respect, films are holding back the development of professional standards in the theater?

Alkazi: Yes, because as I said, the theater itself has not set standards of its own. The standards of acting, for example, are the standards of acting that you find in the films. These, as you know, are horrendously low, are appalling, are shocking. And what theaters there are, are ashamed to call these jack-o-knaves cavorting on the screen actors, to pass them off as such. Every young man who comes onto the stage sees himself as some sort of film hero. He dresses like some of these well-known film stars, behaves like them, acquires their mannerisms, and so on. Invariably when they come to us here at the School they have this sort of filmstar veneer over their personalities. I must say that it doesn't take very long to sandpaper it off.

JSAL: Well, what about radio plays? Are they to any extent helping the development of drama?

Alkazi: A great deal of literary talent went into the film world because it was the world which could afford to pay. Most of the theater houses were taken over by the films. They were converted into the cinema houses, and most of the actors from the theaters went to films and similarly, most of the literary talent went to the films. Even today those among the finest literary talents in the country have gone into films and still feed the films. The other source of income was the radio, particularly under the two Bokhari brothers.[6] There was a great interest in radio. Since both these brothers, I understand, were passionately devoted to the theater, they also brought a large number of talented writers to radio. Since then, since the early forties, it has been a source of income for playwrights. But the radio demands a certain type of script, a certain type of writing. Many of these writers have gotten accustomed to writing for the radio so that, by and large, their plays tend to be plays that were originally written for the radio which are then adapted for the stage. As you know, this is hardly a happy state of affairs. I find on the whole an incapacity on the part of these playwrights to see their plays in terms of the theater. They hear rather than see. On the whole, they get carried away by the theme and the ideas which are mouthed by the characters, but are unable really to see this in action in terms of the stage. Therefore, the whole process of translating the script into stage language is a most painful process, both for the playwright and for the producer. So radio plays cannot really be said to make substantial contributions to the development of Indian theater. Most of the plays which are printed tend to be radio scripts. A playwright, naturally, if he is unable to see his work performed on the stage, is very anxious that a large number of people come to know of him at least as a playwright. Therefore, he has his works published and acquires a certain reputation as a writer. But recognition of stage problems has come to these writers only from the interpretation of their plays on stage.

JSAL: Have you been able to do any experimental theater here in Delhi?

Alkazi: I've tried to avoid the word "experimental" for different reasons. Anything here passes for an experiment. Anybody who would like to consider himself a producer or director almost automatically becomes one. For example, a person who does not use a front curtain will consider himself to be experimental. A person who does a play without any intervals and so on will consider himself to be experimental. A person who mimes a few **properties** on stage will consider himself to be experimental. I think it's a pathetic interpretation of the word. On the other hand, when you use the term "experimental," it's largely in regard to work which does not have commercial possibilities in the theater or film. In any case, most of the films which are done on the stage have hardly any commercial possibilities. Apart from a few hits which you might find in Bengal and a few more rare ones in Maharashtra, there are few plays which have many commercial possibilities and have literally run for hundreds of nights.

I would think of "experimental" in another sense. For example, in a technique or a style of acting which completely eschews the realistic and the naturalistic such as you have in Stanislavski. The use, say, of any one of the folk forms to communicate a contemporary theme and to tackle contemporary problems -- that I would consider to be experimental. Doing plays in the open air, doing plays against monuments, against ruins, and so on, is not experimental at all. I mean, they provide a picturesque background and scenery for rather conventionally produced plays. And that is really all I have done in Delhi. I've merely used some of the scenic beauty that we have in the monuments as backgrounds. The plays I've done are Dharmavir Bharati's *Andha Yug* and Girish Karnad's *Tughluq* at the Tughluq ruins.[7] I consider the Tughluq ruins and the Old Fort ruins, for example, to be magnificent backgrounds for some of the more spectacular productions, for historical plays, for example, or for mythological or Shakespearean plays. These monuments which are pitted and scarred by time are magnificent as backdrops. But that is no more experimental than a team from Hollywood coming over here to do a sequence against the Taj Mahal.

No, the thing is that we haven't really had the time or the experience, really, to get together a group of people who have been working together for a sufficient period of time, who are sick and tired of their established approach to the theater, who are familiar with some of the problems involved, or who are at least provoked and agitated by some of those problems, technical, stylistic, and thematic, which exist in the Indian theater and who would wed themselves to the task of throwing away those conventions, of rejecting them and trying to reach the mainspring of these forms, either by putting aside the traditions altogether, sweeping them aside completely and starting from scratch, or by tapping the more vital traditional forms and seeing how they can be used for contemporary plays and subjects. The work that Grotowski does in Poland, for example, I would consider to be experimental; the work that Peter Brook did, which was only tentative, ended there and has progressed no further. The kind of work that Artaud did project with his Theater of Cruelty, which again was tentative, was a scheme which has never really been carried through. It's not enough to be able to use a *Marat-Sade* as an example of the Theater of Cruelty, I don't think. So the word "experimental" is rather difficult to define here, particularly because of the falsity of experience in the field.

JSAL: What about Indian audiences which, at least by American standards, come in late with a lot of fuss and flurry, and leave early?

Alkazi: By Western standards they might be considered rude. Somehow there is not this fantastic aloofness and sanctity of the arts in India. This is common in the East, except in Japan where there is elaborate ceremony in the theater. But I think the arts are accepted here as a part and parcel of everyday living. In the folk arts, for example -- folk songs and folk dances -- the themes are connected with the soil, with the actual business, say, of harvesting or of sowing or of fishing -- occupational work. For it to be uprooted from that milieu and to be presented now as an esthetic artifact evoked from the life to which it belongs is very difficult.

I daresay in the course of time there will be forms of dance and forms of entertainment which are more elaborate and developed, which are highly stylized, and which will have taken their inspiration from these folk forms. But the people who dance in your folk dances are not students of dance who have taken up folk dancing. They are, literally, farmers and fishermen. They may really be prostitutes from the streets of Bombay. They are people who, in addition to being farmers or fishermen, also dance. Therefore, there is not so much the viewpoint of a spectacle to be presented before the public as there is the viewpoint of a celebration and a dance to be shared by the community as a whole. Also, since many of the forms -- like Kathakali -- are performed in the open air, they are extremely difficult to control. However much you may be able to control the human element, you will not be able to control the barking of dogs or the flying of birds or the movement of clouds across the sky or the sudden emergence of the moon from behind the clouds at the moment when you wanted darkness on the stage. All that is part and parcel of the sheer flavor and the joy of performing in the open air, where the accidental also partakes of the totality of what is presented on the stage. Now, most of the performances in India are in the open air. There is a certain relaxation about all of this because, in any case, most of the myths and legends which are being performed on the stage -- if there is a stage -- are well-known to the people. They know that today such-and-such an episode will be enacted and that tomorrow such-and-such an episode will be enacted. If they have already seen or are familiar with an earlier episode, they will walk in at a later one. There's this constant movement of the audience to the performance and away from it. Another reason for this movement is that in the middle of a dramatic performance in an Indian village, a woman will want to rush home to take the rice off the fire because she does not have a servant to do this for her and also because she does not have the apparatus that you have in your country to keep all these things firmly under control. Now I think there's a certain charm and beauty and attractiveness in this apparently casual behavior.

The Indian audience does not demonstrate its enjoyment of a play by applauding loudly, and on the whole, waiting for the applause is a phenomenon which has only come in the more cosmopolitan areas like Delhi and Bombay. Not even Calcutta. In Calcutta the audiences just quietly, even solemnly, get up at the end of a performance and walk out without any applause whatsoever. And it is not something which the actors would find missing. Now here, of course, in Delhi and in Bombay we tend to judge the success of a performance by the amount of applause it has evoked, but this is not so in most of these other places. This has not been a problem for me in my productions. I've come to have less of an esthetic approach to the theater as a form. I'm not so particular about these matters. When, for example, we have printed on our tickets "Children under twelve will not be allowed," and a whole family comes to buy tickets at our box office, a family which I well realize can hardly afford to pay for those tickets, a family coming in its entirety because there is no one at home to look after the child -- when this family has been attracted to a theatrical experience, I think it's rather callous on my part to turn them away merely because there's a possibility that the child might come. I think the audiences have become sensible enough now to carry their children away the minute they start crying or upsetting the other members of the audience. As long as this sort of unwritten regulation is followed by the people, I see no reason why they and their children should not be allowed to see the performance. Invariably when you read the reminiscences of people who have been attracted to the theater, they are their childhood reminiscences. One often talks about being taken by one's aunt or by one's parents at age ten to see such-and-such a play without being at all aware of the stature of the actor performing on the stage, about being moved or struck by the kind of performance that went on. I see absolutely no reason why one should deny these experiences to youngsters, although we certainly do not have actors of that stature to capture their imagination. No actors, but we do have critics -- many of them.

The critics in cities like Delhi and Bombay do succeed, I think, in preventing a sizable portion of the audience from coming to see a play. They certainly constitute a problem. It is here that we expect a certain intellectual standard, a certain detachment, a certain integrity. Quite frequently there are social pulls, as there are in any part of the world, exerted upon the critics. There are groups which throw lavish parties, entertaining on a grand scale which the poorer organizations would never be able to do in order to invite critics. And naturally all of them are fallible and human and there would naturally be a tendency on the part of those who have received this sort of hospitality or entertainment to respond just as hospitably in their columns. But on the whole, I think there have been a few critics who have steadfastly stood by the theater. The late Dr. Charles Fabri is a name which comes to mind. I think his main aim was to attract large numbers of people to the theater, and if his reviews erred, they erred on the side of kindness. On the other hand, there have been critics who, not so sure of their own attitudes and their own opinions and wishing merely to establish their authority as critics, have maintained an unnecessarily rigid and negative attitude towards the work of amateurs. Not that I suggest for a moment that the standards of criticism should be any the laxed because they are amateurs.

JSAL: Have you ever had any problems in this respect?

Alkazi: Yes, certainly. For fifteen years I've had to fight the critics. I found it necessary to fight them, though some people considered it bad taste on my part to do so. I fought them consistently in Bombay. On every occasion where I felt that there had been a mean or an unfair review -- I don't mean a critical review; one would expect that -- but an ill-informed review, a presumptuous review -- I fought back and I fought back hard. I think that helped me a great deal in establishing theater in Bombay, the theater movement in Bombay as a whole. Particularly when a person has worked in the theater for so many years, has maintained a certain standard, has tried to establish a certain integrity in the choice and style of the plays that he does, naturally he comes to win a certain amount of respect from his public as well as from his critics. I think one wins respect partially because one can hit back. Most critics are, of course, in the fortunate position where one cannot hit back at them. They have a completely free hand. Quite frequently, of course, some of my replies to these critics were edited in such a way as to appear preposterous, as to appear completely nonsensical. But there again, I think it was the blatant dishonesty and -- what should I say -- the sheer cowardice of the people who deliberately distort your ideas in order to make you appear foolish in the public eye. I think it's necessary to hit back. I did this not only by writing back to the papers, but also by asking for criticism. I had post-mortems after the shows. I invited the public and also the press. I invited the critics to open discussions in public. Very rarely did any of them take me up on this. But the public responded well. Quite frequently, as I mentioned before, we had post-mortems in Bombay in the early Theater Group and The Theater Unit in the early fifties. We had regular post-mortems, and I can assure you that we were far more critical of ourselves than our critics had ever been.

JSAL: Do you feel that Indian critics perform a legitimate function in the Indian theater? Especially Indian critics writing in English? Have they been able to give you decent pointers? Have they been able to make justifiable criticism? Have they helped you to develop as a director?

Alkazi: Quite honestly, I don't think so. The kind of criticism that has helped me has been from critical friends, from critical members of the audience, from people who meet me after the show and discuss the show with me, from discussions and so on that I might have with people. But I would not really say that opening the paper on the morning after the show and reading a criticism of the play that had gone on the night before is any help in giving you pointers in improving the show or in making you see yourself with greater clarity. The standards are fantastic and constantly changing. For example, any group that comes from abroad is treated with a great deal of sympathy and even kindness. It has become a matter almost of hospitality over here on the part of the critics to laud these productions to the skies, though they may not deserve it. To a certain extent, this applies also to productions coming from outside Delhi and particularly to productions from certain parts of the country. I don't want to be specific on this, but it is so. It is really quite unfair because quite frequently it happens that worthwhile productions from other parts of the country have come and have not received half of what they deserve. I do not know whether there are certain latent prejudices involved, but I think in the course of time this is bound to change as you get a public which becomes more and more accustomed to going to the theater irrespective of the reviews. If, for example, a person were to read a critical review, a negative review, and then were to come and see a show which he enjoyed. He would naturally be dubious about a similar review the next time. Unfortunately, among the more immature critics, some of whom serve on the papers with fairly wide circulations, a lot of factionalism and personal prejudice has come in. I do not, for example, think it is proper for a person who himself is participating as an actor in the plays of certain groups to write reviews of other plays or to review his own play or the play in which he is acting. This often happens. It often happens as well that the critic who is writing a review of a play has not himself been present at the show. There is a code of ethics about the theater which I hope in the course of time will be firmly established and adhered to.

Let's look at some critical comments on some of the recent productions in Delhi. For example, *Hori* based on Premchand's novel *Godān*. Some of the objections to it were that it was not at all dramatic. I agree that this is true. I wouldn't say that it is not at all dramatic, but I don't think that it makes a good piece for theater. I think that is is a novel that has been presented in dramatic form, as it were, on the stage; but it has the quality of an epic rather than a piece of dramatic writing. Now I was not as much concerned with presenting a dramatic work on the stage as I was with giving our students a chance to portray rural life, village life, on the stage, and of creating the kind of texture, the quietness, the modulations and the rhythm of life in the countryside here and now. There are obvious defects in the play. Through dramatization it has lost one of its dimensions. This is the city life which was in the novel. There was a contrast of city life and country life. There was a whole group of characters -- journalists, politicians, etc. -- who were city characters, and their contrast with the country characters is constantly there throughout the novel. In the play, this whole dimension was cut out completely with the result that a certain perspective in the writing was lost. Then, secondly, it is true that the thing does not work up to a climax. I mean, Hori dies from sheer exhaustion from building a road, an event which can hardly be dramatic on the stage. You might be able to do it in film, but to have a character on the stage dying from exhaustion is something that is rather feeble, really.

Rather than concerning ourselves with these dramatic issues, I wanted to see to what extent we could understand how our lives are molded by our social existence. For example, I wanted to consider the significance of the village *pancāyat*, its power and influence on the life of a community. I wanted to investigate a thing like caste, the position of widows, the problem of illiteracy, the problem of the conflict of generations -- Hori's son going away to Lucknow and coming back with new ideas, refusing to share this village life any more, wanting to break away from the family and go away for good. These are some of the social problems which I wanted to be scrutinized by the students as well as the staff so that we could come to some conclusive attitude. I chose this play because I wanted it as an exercise for our students. I wanted them to be able to create a village with their own hands, a village which would then become the theme for a theatrical performance. I wanted them to feel that it's not necessary to have air-conditioned theaters, to have fully equipped stages, and so on. I wanted them to feel that any bit of land could be converted with a little bit of imagination into a place for theatrical performance. I wanted them to relate the ideas in the head with the work of the hands, to be able to feel, literally, the dignity of labor, to see something rise up before their eyes, something which they have created with their own hands in the shape of which work they have formed the contours of a society, and within this almost cultural activity to be able to bring to life characters inhabiting that scene, and, night after night, to pose problems to the audience. This, I thought, was far more of a valuable experience than the same thing presented on a conventional stage. Before I wanted them to create a stage, I wanted them to create a theater, an auditorium. I wanted them to be able to create the feeling of freedom, of openness and at the same time a certain formality, a certain acquired dignity in the manner in which, for example, the audience comes, in the manner in which we have bonded the whole thing very simply with the leftovers of our past productions which we normally throw away, but which we have now utilized as economically as possible to create a theater. The play was, perhaps, too long. I would agree that it could have been shortened. As one goes along and has the time to pause and think -- after all, we have only had twelve performances of it -- and has the time to develop it more, I think eventually one might be able to cast it in a more dramatic form.

JSAL: Please make some critical comments about some dramatic productions you've seen elsewhere in India or abroad. What about the production of *King Lear* in Hindi, for example?

Alkazi: It was in Urdu. It was translated by Majnun Gorakhpuri. I think the first thing that amazed audiences was that Shakespeare could be done in Urdu. It was common to have a great deal of cynicism, misgivings, and doubt. I think that it was one thing for one of the lesser comedies of Shakespeare to come across. One might even think that a *Julius Caesar* might come across in Urdu. But to think of a *King Lear* coming across was something of a totally new experience for audiences. I must confess that I too had misgivings in working on this performance. But though I soon found that it was certainly not an inspired translation, certainly not sensitive or poetic -- it was a workman's translation -- and although there were scores of misinterpretations and mis-translations of the original, still I felt that it was something to start with. Our people still have a prejudice of how a Shakespearean play is normally produced: with painted backdrops, a large number of constantly changing scenes where the curtain drops, and so on. Here all they saw was a bare stage with one door against which were reliefs based on barbaric European sculpture. There was also heavy timber, almost like rafters. This is what struck them the most. It was not a realistic scene at all. Though the rusted iron sheets -- for which, incidentally, we didn't owe anything to Peter Brook because we knew nothing of the *Lear* production which he had done -- these corrugated iron sheets bought in old Delhi which we had hammered out gave it a certain barbaric starkness and simplicity. This simplicity immediately struck you as you came into the room. Then for the first time we had a certain masculinity and virility in the acting, a directness without being melodramatic. It was stark; it was hard; it was grating. There were no attempts made for senseless appeal and so on. There was a certain sweep, I think, and a certain vigor and force in the rhythm of the production which swept you along. The play ran for four hours, I think, if I'm not mistaken, with only one intermission. It was perhaps rather an agonizing experience in some ways because you found yourself caught up in this small room with the passion, the power, the agony of Lear there before you and you could not escape or turn away from it. I think it is that kind of an overwhelming impact with its terseness, its compactness, which struck people. One could feel this with every audience that came in. For example, when Utpal Dutt[8] came in and saw it -- and he is a tremendously critical person -- he was completely bowled over. He asked where we got the ideas, whether we had gotten such and such an idea from a production in Germany. I said that of course I hadn't; I hadn't even been to Germany. Why is it that one immediately assumes that you have gotten ideas from another production? It is very amusing. One Hindi writer came here and wandered around with me to the open-air theater. He asked me from which foreign journal I had gotten the idea for this little open-air theater. I told him that it was fantastic! Just as they indulged in a great deal of plagiarism, putting out some other author's play as their own merely because they had translated it, so they expect every one else to do the same. One is contemptuous of that kind of thing. One should ignore it. It's really amazing. For example, some people have this peculiar notion that this school might be a replica of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, and they have said so in so many words. And all they would need to do would be to ask for the syllabus or some sort of prospectus from the Royal Academy. It's absurd. I can't understand it.

But enough of this. Let's talk again another time.

FOOTNOTES

1. Premchand's *Godān* (1936) is available in a translation into English by Gordon C. Roadarmal as *The Gift of a Cow* (Bloomington, 1969).

2. Upendranath Ashk, b. 1910, was educated at Punjab University; he is known primarily in Urdu as a short story writer, but has also written novels and plays in Urdu, as well as in Hindi and Punjabi. A future issue of the *Journal of South Asian Literature*, edited by Professor Romesh Shonek, will be devoted entirely to works by Ashk.

3. Girish Karnad, b. 1940, is the author of *Tughluq* (1964), originally written in Kannada and translated into English by the author (Madras, 1972). His *Hayavadana*, a contemporary treatment of the transposed heads myth, appeared, again in his own translation, in *Enact*, No. 54 (June 1971); this issue also contains an interview with Karnad, as well as an article on the author, "Playwright in Perspective," by S. Gopalie. More recently, Karnad has written, produced and acted in a highly successful movie version of the novel *Samskāra* by U. Ananthamurthi.

Adya Rangacharya, b. 1904, has written novels and dramas in Kannada; he was educated at both the University of Bombay and the University of London. Among his works in English are *Drama in Sanskrit Literature* (1947) and *The Indian Theatre* (1971).

4. Mohan Rakesh, 1925-1972, has written short stories, novels and plays in Hindi. His novel *Andhere band kamre* (1961) appeared in English in a translation by Jai Ratan as *Lingering Shadows* (Delhi, 1971); his plays include *Āshādh kā ek din* (1958), translated by Sarah K. Ensley as *One Day in Ashadha*, which appears in *Enact*, Nos. 32-33 (August-September 1969); his *Ādhe adhūre*, translated as *Halfway House* by Bindu Batre, appears in *Enact*, No. 53 (May 1971); his *Lahroṅ ke rājhans*, translated by Paul Jacob and Meena Williams as *The Great Swans of the Waves*, appears in *Enact*, Nos. 73-74, Mohan Rakesh Memorial Number (January-February 1973); this last issue contains a number of important critical pieces on Rakesh. *Ādhe adhūre* also appears in a translation by Steven M. Poulos and Rama Nath Sharma in the *Journal of South Asian Literature* 9, 2-3, Rakesh Memorial Volume; this issue also contains an extended interview with Rakesh, as well as translations of a number of his short stories.

5. Satyajit Ray, the distinguished Bengali film director, is best known for his trilogy, which includes *Pather Panchali* (1954), which won a 1956 Cannes Film Festival Award, *Aparajito* (1957) and *Apur Samsar* (1959). For an excellent discussion of Ray's art, see Eric Rhode, "Satyajit Ray: A Study" in Julius Bellone, ed., *Renaissance of the Film* (New York, 1970), pp. 9-23.

6. Bokhari brothers: Zulfikar Ali Bokhari, station director of All India Radio Bombay, and later Director-General of Radio Pakistan; and Ahmad Shah Bokhari, the second Director-General of All India Radio, Delhi; after partition, he too went to Pakistan where he taught for several years; later he was appointed Permanent Delegate for Pakistan at the United Nations. The latter Bokhari has made a considerable name for himself as a humorist in Urdu; he writes under the pen name of "Pitras."

7. Dharmavir Bharati, b. 1926, holds a Ph.D. in Hindi from Allahabad University, where he has also taught. He has written novels, poems and plays in Hindi; his *Andha Yug* appeared as *The Blind One* in a translation by Paul Jacob in *Enact*, No. 65 (May 1972); this issue also contains a group of articles on this play, including one by E. Alkazi entitled "Directing 'Andha Yug'."

8. Utpal Dutt: noted Bengali actor, director and stage designer, as well as author of numerous politically leftist dramas; for an interview with Dutt, see A. J. Gunawardana, "Theatre as a Weapon: An Interview with Utpal Dutt," *The Drama Review*, XV, 3 (Spring 1971), pp. 225-237.

Farley Richmond

INDIAN THEATRE MATERIALS

A selected, annotated bibliography

INTRODUCTION

The aims of this bibliography are twofold. First, it provides a comprehensive list of important materials primarily in English on Indian drama and theatre. And second, the short annotations guide the reader in selecting materials appropriate to his particular needs.

The main body of the bibliography is divided into four principal subject areas: Dance (Classical and Folk), Sanskrit Drama and Theatre, Traditional Drama and Theatre and Regional-language Drama and Theatre. In addition a special category has been added to include general and miscellaneous texts many of which are regarded as standard works in the field and may be consulted by the layman to some advantage. Research students will undoubtedly wish to use the bibliographies cited at the beginning of this work.

Several arbitrary limitations have been imposed in compiling the bibliography. Although the vast majority of references are in English, a few selected works in European languages, most of which were published in the twentieth century, have been included to suggest the interest shown abroad in this field. It seemed advisable to select references which provide significant and useful information for students at various levels of their studies. To this end books with information available in more comprehensive sources have arbitrarily been excluded. Articles of less than five pages have also been excluded unless they provide unusual information not found elsewhere. Plays or play collections published in Devanagari script and translated literally into English were not included primarily because they are designed as texts for Indian college students and not for the casual Western reader.

Numerous periodicals have been searched, some of which contain useful articles and notes too brief to be cited in this bibliography. Among these are the following: *Bulletin of the Sangeet Natak Akademi*, prececessor to the more scholarly *Sangeet Natak; Enact,* which publishes short plays, articles reviews of productions and books and interviews dealing primarily with the contemporary regional-language theatre in the large urban areas; *Marg*, which publishes fabulously illustrated articles on architecture, fine and performing arts; *Natya*, a theatre periodical which disseminates information on Sanskrit dramatic literature and play production.

For other short articles and notes on various aspects of Indian drama, see the various other periodicals and scholarly journals noted below in the "List of Journal Abbreviations."

Completion of this project would have been impossible without the tremendous effort of the numerous graduate students of the Department of Theatre, Michigan State University, during the past six years. Of these special thanks go to Martha Ashton, who diligently checked and cross-listed references collected in the early stages of the project. Without the foresight of Dr. James R. Brandon, University of Hawaii, who first conceived of assembling a list of Asian theatre materials, this bibliography may never have been complied. I am particularly grateful to Yasmin Richmond, who corrected numerous mistakes in the annotations. I am also thankful for the assistance of Nancy Lupinsky, who typed the manuscript in rough draft. And finally, but not lastly, Dr. William T. Ross, Director of the Asian Studies Center, Michigan State University, and the late Dr. Hideya Kumata, Director of the International Communications Institute, Michigan State University, both of whom contributed generous financial assistance and much-appreciated moral support to the realization of this project.

LIST OF JOURNAL ABBREVIATIONS

ABORI	*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* (Poona)
BJA	*British Journal of Aesthetics* (London)
BAUOS	*Bulletin of the Allahabad University Oriental Society*
BITC	*Bulletin of the Institute of Traditional Culture* (Madras)
BSNA	*Bulletin of the Sangeet Natak Akademi* (New Delhi)
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (London) (Incorporating the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies)*
AS	*African Studies* (London)
CD	*Comparative Drama*
CIL	*Contemporary Indian Literature* (New Delhi)
CR	*Calcutta Review*
E	*Enact* (Delhi)
ETJ	*Educational Theatre Journal*
IWI	*Illustrated Weekly of India* (Bombay)
IHQ	*Indian Historical Quarterly* (Calcutta)
IL	*Indian Literature* (New Delhi)
JAAC	*Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (Detroit)
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society* (New Haven)
JBRS	*Journal of the Bihar Research Society* (Bankipore)
JBBRAS	*Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiastic Society*
JMSOI	*Journal of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Oriental Institute*
JMA	*Journal of the Music Academy* (Madras)
JOR	*Journal of Oriental Research* (Madras)
JUB	*Journal of the University of Bombay*
MI	*March of India* (Delhi)
M	*Marg* (Bombay)
N	*Natya* (New Delhi)
PO	*Poona Orientalist*
QJNCPA	*Quarterly Journal of the National Centre for the Performing Arts* (Bombay)
SRA	*Samskrita Ranga Annual* (Madras)
SN	*Sangeet Natak* (New Delhi)
T	*Triveni* (New Delhi)
TDR	*The Drama Review* (New York)
TIA	*Times of India Annual*
UA	*United Asia* (Bombay)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Bibliographies . . . .
- General and Miscellaneous Texts . . . .
- Dance (Classical and Folk) . . . .
- Sanskrit Drama and Theatre . . . .
  - General Texts . . . .
  - Specialized Studies . . . .
  - Dramaturgical Texts and Summaries . . . .
  - Esthetics . . . .
  - Playwrights and Play Analyses . . . .
  - Play Collections and Plays . . . .
- Traditional Drama and Theatre . . . .
  - General and Miscellaneous Texts . . . .
  - Specialized Studies . . . .
  - Play Collections . . . .
- Regional-Language Drama and Theatre . . . .
  - General Texts and Specialized Studies . . . .
  - Bengali Drama, Theatre and Rabindranath Tagore . . . .
  - Play Collections and Plays . . . .

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Awasthi, Suresh. "Theatre Collections and Museums in India," *Theatre Research*, VII, 1-2 (1956), 73-76. A valuable annotated list.

Bakshi, Sri Ram. "Indian Theatre: A Preliminary Check-list." (mimeographed, Lawrence, Kansas: Theatre Department, University of Kansas, n. d.). An unusually comprehensive list of thirty-five pages, arranged in topical order. Unfortunately marred by a profusion of typographical errors.

Bibliography of the Books, Papers and Other Contributions of Dr. V. Raghavan, Professor of Sanskrit, University of Madras. Ahmedabad: New Order Book Co., 1968. Annotated edition including references to numerous and often profound articles and books on Sanskrit and traditional drama and theatre written by Dr. Raghavan.

Crothers, J. Frances. *The Puppeteer's Library Guide: The Bibliographical Index to the Literature of the World of Puppet Theatre*. Vol. I. Metuchen, N. J.: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1971. Pp. 223-227 contain number citations of books and articles useful to the specialist.

Jain, Sushil Kumar. comp. *Indian Literature in English: A Bibliography*. 3 vols. Regina Saskatchewan: University of Saskatchewan, 1965-67. Volume 2 on Drama, compiled primarily from materials in the British Museum and India Office Libraries, is useful for its extensive references to plays written English in the nineteenth and early twentiety century.

Metha, C. C. "Bibliography of English Plays Written by Indian Authors." Baroda: Bank of Baroda, 1969. A short but useful list, unfortunately containing many typographical errors.

__________. *Bibliography of Stageable Plays in Indian Languages*. Baroda: M. S. University of Baroda, 1963. Meant primarily for Indian producers, this is the most comprehensive work of its kind. Of use to scholars for regional-language literature.

Naqvi, G. A. "The Indian Stage: A Select Bibliography," *Cultural News from India*, III, 4 (July 1962), 31-40. A short, annotated bibliography of books and articles.

Patil, H. S. and R. M. Sar. *Select Bibliographies: I -- The Arts.* New Delhi: Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 1966. (Aspects of Indian Culture Series) Contains selected, annotated bibliographies for all the arts, including the theatre, pp. 185-199.

Raghavan, V. "A Bibliography of English Translations of Sanskrit Drama," *IL*, III, 1 (Oct. 1959 -Nov. 1960), 141-153. An extremely useful collection of references in capsule form.

__________, and C. S. Sundaram. "A Bibliography of Modern Sanskrit Plays," *SRA*, III (1960-61, 1961-62), 17-56. An excellent annotated bibliography.

Renou, Louis. "Research on the Indian Theatre Since 1890," *SRA*, 4 (Madras, 1966), 67-91. One of the most valuable annotated documents on Sanskrit drama and theatre events as yet compiled.

Richmond, Farley. "Asian Theatre Materials: A Selected Bibliography," *TDR*, XV, 3 (Spring 1971), 312-323. Emphasis on books and plays in English, published in the twentieth century. Cites significant visual and aural material available on the market.

Schuyler, Montgomery. *A Bibliography of the Sanskrit Drama.* New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1906. Long a standard reference work now badly in need of revision.

Withey, J. A. "Research in Asian Theatre: An Indian Model," *ETJ*, XXIII, 2 (May 1971), 127-134. A convincing plea for intensive, close research. Useful sources cited.

GENERAL AND MISCELLANEOUS TEXTS

Books

Anand, Mulk Raj. *The Indian Theatre.* New York: Roy Pub., 1951. An all to brief account of traditional and westernized regional-language theatre with a plea for the creation of a unified national theatre.

Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Nataka Akademi, Hyderabad. *Music, Dance and Drama In Andhra Pradesh: A Report of a Survey.* Hyderabad: Sangeeta Nataka Akademi, 1960. Useful tool for researchers in the field. Numerous theatrical groups and their style of performance catagorized by geographical area.

Barua, Birinchi Kumar. *History of Assamese Literature.* Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1965. Chap. 3 deals, in part, with Ankiya Nats. Chap. 8 is a short history of Assamese drama which originated under the influence of Western theatre.

Benegal, Som. *A Panorama of Theatre in India.* Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1968. An excellent summary of the contemporary theatre movement since the nineteenth century. Contains short but interesting chapters on Sanskrit theatre with a brief transitional chapter concerning traditional theatre forms.

Bhattacharyya, D. H. *Origin and Development of the Assamese Drama and the Stage.* Gauhati: Barua Agency, 1964. A descriptive study based on his Ph. D. diss. for Gauhati Univ.; not always reliable in detail.

Bowers, Faubion. *Theatre in the East: A Survey of Asian Dance and Drama.* New York: Grove Press, 1960. Chap. 1, pp. 3-83, summarizes the historical background of Indian theatre and concludes with subchapters on dance and drama today. Factual information badly in need of revision.

Chaitanya, Krishna. *A History of Malayalam Literature.* New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1971. Contains useful chapters on the evolution of the dance-drama and modern drama.

Dasgupta, Hemendranath. *The Indian Stage.* 4 vols. Calcutta: Metropolitan Printing and Pub. House, 1944. Perhaps the best summary of the development of modern theatre, particularly in Bengal, published to date. Facts and arguments questionable in places. Vol. I contains short, insubstantial chapters on classical Sanskrit theatre and drama.

Ganguly, Anil Baran. *Sixty-Four Arts in Ancient India.* New Delhi: English Book Store, 1962. Contains brief technical summaries of dance and drama.

Gargi, Balwant. *Theatre in India.* New York: Theatre Arts, 1962. A good textual description of contemporary theatre with which the author mainly deals. The chapter on classical theatre is virtually useless because of its brevity.

George, K. M. *A Survey of Malayalam Literature.* London: Asia Pub. House, 1968. Contains extremely interesting chapters on Kathakali plays (*attakkatha*) and modern drama.

Ghosh, Manomohan. *Contributions to the History of the Hindu Drama: Its Origin, Development and Diffusion.* Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1958. Eight essays on Indian and Southeast Asian traditional theatre. Includes a translation of *Rama's Triumph,* an Ankiya Nat written by Sankaradeva of Assam.

Gupta, Chandra Bhan. *The Indian Theatre, Its Origin and Development Up to the Present Day.* Banaras: Motilal Banarasidass, 1954. A general survey which excludes much more interesting factual details.

Jacob, Georg, Hans Jensen and Hans Losch. *Das Indische Schattentheater.* Stuttgart: Verlag Von W. Kohlhammer, 1931. Includes German translations of the Indian Sanskrit shadow dramas *Subhatas Dutangada, Dharmabhyudayam* and *Ramabhyudaya,* with valuable commentary and comparison with Southeast Asian forms of dance and dance-drama.

Nair, P. K. Parameswaran. *History of Malayalam Literature.* Trans. E. M. J. Venniyoor. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1967. Chapters devoted to Kathakali literature and modern drama. A brief but valuable summary translated from the original Malayalam.

Rangacharya, Adya. *The Indian Theatre.* New Delhi: National Book Trust, India, 1971. A well-balanced and thoughtfully written text covering the origins and development of Sanskrit drama, the traditional and regional-language drama and theatre. The best published to date.

Ranganath, H. K. *The Karnatak Theatre.* Dharwar: Karnatak Univ., 1960. Emphasizes contemporary developments but the first few chapters are reserved for a cursory examination of the classical and rural theatre forms of the area. Full of glaring inaccuracies in the earlier chapters.

Ridgeway, William. *The Dramas and Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races in Reference to the Origin of Greek Tradedy, with an Appendix on the Origin of Greek Comedy.* Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1915. Includes interesting material and what are now somewhat out-of-date observations about ancient Indian theatre and forms of North Indian traditional theatre, such as Raslila, Ramlila, and Krishnalila.

Scott, Adolphe Clarence. *The Theatre in Asia.* London: Weindenfeld and Nicolson, 1972. Contains an interesting chapter which makes a good introduction to India's theatrical and dance traditions.

UNESCO. *Theatre in India.* Paris: International Theatre Institute, with the assistance of UNESCO, n.d. A special issue of *World Theatre* with interesting photographs and an all too brief text.

Yajnik, Ramanlal Kanaiyalal. *The Indian Theatre: Its Origin and Its Later Developments Under European Influence, with Special Reference to Western India.* New York: George All & Unwin, 1934. Scholarly survey with special emphasis on Shakespeare's impact on the development of modern Indian Theatre.

DANCE (CLASSICAL AND FOLK)

Books

Ambrose, Kay. *Classical Dances and Costumes of India.* London: A. & C. Black, 1957. Attempts brevity and clarity of presentation and succeeds to an extent. Concentration on Bharata Natyam, Kathakali, Kathak, and Manipuri. Factual material somewhat questionable. Photographs of authentic productions indiscriminately mixed with those showing adaptations created by Ram Gopal.

Banerji, Projesh. *Dance of India.* Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1956. Touches briefly on various schools of dance. Broader in scope than most books in the field. Only a few good illustrations, however.

__________. *The Folk-Dance of India.* Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1944. A short, somewhat dated summary of various regional dances and dance-dramas, such as Chhau and Ras.

Bhattacharayya, Asutosh. *Chhau Dance of Purulia.* Calcutta: Rabindra Bharati Univ., 1972. The most authoritative study available.

Bhavnani, Enakshi. *The Dance in India.* Bombay: D. S. Taraporewala Sons and Co., [1972?]. Although somewhat confusing in presentation and unreliable in much of its factual information, the book contains excellent photographic documentation and useful descriptive analysis of dance and dance-drama. First published as *Indian Dance.*

Bose, Mandrankranta. *Classical Indian Dancing.* Calcutta: General Printers and Pub., 1970.

Classical and Folk Dances of India. Bombay: Marg Pub., 1963. An outstanding set of articles compiled from earlier editions of the magazine. Innumerable superb photographs of dance and dance-drama, in color and black and white.

Das, Minati. *A Study of Hand Gestures.* Marburg: Univ. of Marburg Press, 1961.

Dayal, Leela (Row). *Nritta Manjari: The 62 Fundamental Sequences of Bharata Natyam.* Calcutta: Indian Society of Oriental Art, 1948. Specially prepared illustrations discussed in detail.

De Zoete, Beryl. *The Other Mind: Dance and Life in South India.* London: Victor Gollancz, 1953. Personal accounts of the author's reactions to major and minor dance forms written as a journal, with superb photographs.

Ghurye, Govind Sadasiv. *Bharatnatya and Its Costume.* Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1958. An interesting specialized study.

Gopinath, Natanakalanidhi. *Abhinaya Prakasika.* Madras: Natana Niketan Pub., 1957. Designed for students of Indian dance. An interestingly illustrated, simple to follow text exploring the sign-language of classical dance.

__________. *The Classical Dance Poses of India.* Madras: Natana Niketan Pub., 1955. Material much of which is repeated in his more recent text.

India. Government of India, *The Dance in India.* New Delhi: Pub. Division, 1964. Divides Indian dance into tribal, folk and classical and provides a simple, survey for the novice, with interesting illustrations.

Iyer, E. Krishna. *Bharata Natyam and Other Dances of Tamil Nad.* Baroda: M. S. Univ. of Baroda Press, 1957. A short descriptive summary, including information on dance-dramas.

La Meri (R. M. Hughes). *The Gesture Language of the Hindu Dance.* Bronx, N. Y.: Benjamin Blom, 1964. A textual and photographic interpretation of Bharata Natyam by a westerner.

Menon, Balakrishna. *Indian Classical Dances.* Calcutta: Rabindra Bharati Univ., 1967. A fairly good introduction to Bharata Natyam, Kathakali, Kathak and Manipuri. Useful appendix of the hundred and eight ancient sculptural dance poses (*karanas*).

Patnaik, Dhirendranath. *Odissi Dance.* Bhubaneswar, Orissa: Sangeet Natak Akademi, 1971. General historical survey with many useful illustrations.

Sri Ragini. *Nritanjali: An Introduction to Hindu Dancing.* New York: Hari G. Govil, 1928. A romanticized interpretation of the "spirit" of Hindu dance.

Devi, Ragini. *Dance Dialects of India.* Delhi: Vikas Pub., 1972. A well illustrated and interestingly written introduction.

__________. *Dances of India.* Calcutta: Susil Gupta, 1962. General survey of various unique features of Indian dance with separate chapters each on Bhagavata Mela, Bharata Natyas, Kathakali, Chhau of Seraikella, Manipuri, and Kathak. Short but good. Few illustrations of interest. Excellent bibliography.

Ram Gopal and Serozh Dadanchanji. *Indian Dancing.* London: Phoenix House, 1951. A brief illustrated account of the history of selected dance forms, including the language of gesture and the present state of the art.

Sarabhai, Mrinalini. *Indian Dancing.* Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1967. A simple, basic text for children. Well illustrated.

______________. *The Eight Nayikas: Heroines of the Classical Dance of India.* New York: Dance Perspectives, 1965. (Dance Perspectives, 24) A beautifully illustrated edition with poetic text.

Sathyanarayana, R. *Bharatanatya: A Critical Study.* Mysore: Sri Varalakshmi Academies of Fine Arts, 1969. Scholarly analysis of theory, practice and present condition of classical dance and dance-drama, accompanied by a few illustrations. A much needed addition to this field of study.

Singha, Rina, and Reginald Massey. *Indian Dances: Their History and Growth.* London: Faber & Faber, 1967. An excellent discussion of Kathak. The materials on Kathakali, Bharata Natyam and Manipuri are less convincing. Details on the minor forms of dance are generally incorrect or misleading.

Vatsyayan, Kapila. *Classical Indian Dance In Literature and the Arts.* New Delhi: Sangeet Natak Akademi, 1968. Impressively illustrated work which ties together all ancient arts under the pervading theory of *rasa.* Written with considerable and often unnecessary detail.

Venkatachalam, G. *Dance of India.* Bombay: Nalanda Pub., 1945. Includes separate chapters on Bharata Natyam, Kathakali, and Mohini Attam.

Vestal, Theodore M. *The Chhau Dance of India.* New Delhi: Educational Resources Center, 1970. Descriptive monograph of Chhau of Seraikella, Mayurbhanj and Purulia in northeastern India. Valuable as a simple guide. Designed for Western consumption.

Zarina, Zenia. *Classical Dances of the Orient.* New York: Crown Pub., 1967. Devotes only the first chapter to classical dances of India in which numerous topics are briefly discussed. Selected illustrations aid the textual material. Perhaps the entire book may best be used as an introduction for Western students.

Articles and Periodicals

Arden, John. "The Chhau Dancers of Purulia," *TDR*, XV, 3 (Spring 1971), 64-75. A well written, journalistic account, with a decided political bias.

Khokar, Mohan. "Chhau -- Mask Dance of Seraikella," *Pushpanjali*, V, 1 (1969), 77-92. A sensatively written account of the characteristics and present condition of this fascinating form of dance performed near the border between Bihar and Orissa states. Beautifully illustrated.

Kothari, Sunil. "Chhau Dances of Saraikella," *M*, XXII, 1 (Dec. 1968), 5-29. The most detailed account yet published. Fascinating illustrations.

___________. "Odissi Dance," *QJNCPA*, III, 2 (June 1974), 37-49. Authoritative text illustrated with glorious pictures by Subodhchandra.

Pani, Jiwan. "Chhau -- A Comparative Study of Sareikela and Mayurbhanj Forms," *SN*, 13 (July-Sept. 1969), 35-45. Valuable for its attempt to show relationships between similar forms of theatre along the Bihar/Orissa border area.

____________. "Chhau Dances of Mayurbhanj," *M*, XXII, 1 (Dec. 1968), 31-45. A valuable, detailed summary with lively photographic illustration.

"Problems Facing Bharata Natyam Today: Repoet of a Seminar," *BITC*, 1967,253-307.

Ragini Devi. "Festival of the Goddess Bhagavati in Kerala," *M*, XIX, 2 (mar. 1966), 46-48. Fantastic illustrations accompanying a brief but interesting discussion of a ritual dance which has dramatic overtones.

Ramachandran, Nirmala. "Classical Dance of the Ancient Tamils," *Tamil Culture* (Madras), XII, 1-2 (April-June 1966-July-Sept. 1966), 171-180. Bases her findings on materials derived from the *Silappadikaram*, 2nd century A.D., an important, ancient Tamil epic.

Richmond, Farley. "Purulia Chhau: An Introduction," *Keli* (Cochin), 8 (1971), 15-21. A cursory summary of the characteristics of a recently discovered form of dance-drama of Purulia,. West Bengal.

Singh, E. Nilakanta. "Classical Heritage of *Nata* Movement," *JMSOI*, XVIII, 1-2 (Sept.-Dec. 1968), 64-70. Surveys in detail the implication of dance movements in ritual dances of Manipur.

Vatsyayan, Kapila Malik. "The Classical Indian Dance and Sculpture," *Diogenes*, 45 (Spring 1964), 24-36. Summary of the author's observations which appear in her book on the subject.

Films

Bharatnatyam. Cinema 16 Film Library, Inc., New York. 10 min. B&W. Danced by Shanta and Indrani.

Dance of India: Bharatnatyam. Information Service of India, Washington D. C. 10 min. Filmed on location in South India. Calls attention to the intimate relationship between dance and music.

Dances of India. Bailey Films. 12 min., B&W. Major emphasis on folk dances of various regions of the country.

Therayattam. Radim Films Inc., N. Y. 18 min., B&W. A fascinating film on some ritual dances of Kerala which have dramatic characteristics.

SANSKRIT DRAMA AND THEATRE

General Texts

Books

Babkina, Militina Petrovna. *Narodnyi Teatr Indii.* Moskva: Nauka, 1964. A study of Indian classical dramaturgy.

Bhatt, S. C. *Drama in Ancient India.* New Delhi: Amrit Book Co., 1961. Designed as a simple introduction, the book deals with the origin, development, theory and practice of Sanskrit drama. Concludes with brief analyses of plays and playwrights and skims over influences exerted on later developments in regional theatre.

Chaitanya, Krishna. *A New History of Sanskrit Literature.* New York: Asia Pub. House, 1962. Chaps. 10 and 11 summarize and criticize Sanskrit dramatic literature. Abbreviated remarks on origins and history.

Dasgupta, Surendra Nath and Sushil Kumar De. *A History of Sanskrit Literature: The Classical Period.* Calcutta: Univ. of Calcutta Press, 1947. A standard work discussing drama as one of many branches of literature.

Gowen, Herbert H. *A History of Indian Literature, from Vedic Times to the Present Day.* New York: Greenwood Press, 1968. A general text for western readers. Deals briefly with drama in two short chapters.

Horrwitz, Ernest P. *The Indian Theatre: A Brief Survey of the Sanskrit Drama.* London: Blackie & Sons, 1912. A companion volume to the author's *Short History of Indian Literature.* The author's provides a fanciful, undocumented interpretation of ancient theatre.

Jagirdar, R. V. *Drama in Sanskrit Literature.* Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1947. Dwells on the devolopment of dramatic technique in Sanskrit literature, emphasizing the inherent poetic value of selected scripts to counterbalance the attack of critics who argue that Sanskrit drama in nothing more than embellished epic stories. Of particular value are his comments on Bhavabhuti and his works.

Keith, Arthus Berriedale. *The Sanskrit Drama in Its Origin, Development, Theory and Practice.* London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1924. Though long regarded as a standard scholarly work in the field, many of the author's contentions have recently been challenged.

Konow, Sten. *The Indian Drama.* Trans. S. N. Ghosal. Calcutta: General Printers and Pub., 1969. An impressive analysis first published in Germany in 1920. Now appearing in English for the first time with an extensive, enlightening preface by the translator. Primary emphasis on drama and its structure.

Krishnamachariar, M. *History of Classical Sanskrit Literature.* Madras: Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanams Press, 1937. Bk. 5, pp. 525-706, is a literary account of drama discussed in profuse detail.

Lévi, Sylvain. *Le Théatre Indien.* Paris: Emile Bouillon, 1890. Appears in the *Bibliotheque de l'école des Hautes Etudes.* Vols. 83-85. A standard early work from which much has yet to be gleaned. An English translation of which is long overdue.

MacDonnell, Arthur A. *A History of Sanskrit Literature.* New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1929. Long a standard text; the author provides useful chapters on history and criticism of playwrights and plays. Now somewhat out-of-date.

Rangacharya, Adya. *Drama in Sanskrit Literature.* Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1967. Opposed to the notion that Sanskrit drama is merely epic poetry with garnish, the author traces the growth of Sanskrit literature, examines the origin of drama, authorship of the *Natyasastra,* historical development of the form, analyzes plot development and characterization, discusses staging techniques, analyzes the works of Bhasa, Kalidasa, Sudraka, Harsa and later imitators. He concludes with chapters on Sanskrit revivals and new interpretation of epic and dramatic literature.

Sastri, Gaurinath B. *A Concise History of Classical Sanskrit Literature.* 2nd ed. Calcutta: Oxford Univ. Press, 1960. Abbreviated presentation of history and criticism of dramatic literature. First published in 1947.

Shastri, Surendra Nath. *The Laws and Practice of Sanskrit Drama.* Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1961. An extremely useful book to scholars for it investigates the rules and their application to classical plays. Based on a Ph. D. diss. submitted to the Univ. of Allahabad.

Shekhar, Indu. *Sanskrit Drama: Its Origin and Decline.* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960. A study of the non-Aryan elements that may have influenced the development of Sanskrit drama and an attempt to explain its decline on the basis of class conflicts.

Weber, Albrecht Griedrich. *The History of Indian Literature.* Trans. John Mann and Theodor Zachariae. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1961. A standard early work recently translated from the original German. Contains a chapter dealing with drama as literature.

Wells, Henry W. *The Classical Drama of India: Studies in Its Value for the Literature and Theatre of the World.* New York: Asia Pub. House, 1963. Avoids historical and descriptive materials in favor of analyzing Sanskrit plays for their intrinsic merits and comparing them with western literature, expecially with the works of Shakespeare. A well-written appraisal.

Wilson, H. H., V. Raghavan, K. R. Pisharoti, and Amulya Charan Vidyabhusan. *The Theatre of the Hindus.* Calcutta: Susil Gupta, 1955. An extremely valuable collection of essays on the dramatic system, plot, characterization, *rasa*, language, scenic apparatus, analyses of major and minor plays, theatre architecture, selected forms of South Indian theatre that use Sanskrit, origins of ancient drama and the controversial dance-theatre at Ramgarh. The first eight chapters are reprinted from H. H. Wilson's *Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus* (1871).

Winternitz, M. *History of Indian Literature.* III, 1. Trans. Subhadra Jha. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1963. Devotes a chapter to "Dramatic Poetry," pp. 178-301. An important early work by a noted German scholar.

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Bhat, V. G. "Studies in the Sanskrit Drama." Ph. D. diss., Cambridge Univ., 1933.

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Commaraswamy, A. K. "Hindu Theatre," *IHQ*, 9 (1933), 591-594.

Ghosh, Manomohan. "The Hindu Theatre," *IHQ*, 9 (1933), 501-590.

Raghavan, V. "Sanskrit Drama: Theory and Performance," *CD*, I, 1 (Spring 1967), 36-48. The most useful summary of this subject to be found anywhere in print.

Singh, A. P. "Some Basic Postulates of Sanskrit Dramas," *Patna University Journal*, XXIII, 1 (Jan. 1968), 23-33.

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Books

Bhat, G. K. *The Vidusaka.* Ahmedabad: New Order Book Co., 1959. An excellent scholarly investigation of the origins, evolution, appearance, caste, food and drink, language, name types, qualities, and functions of a type of comic character in Sanskrit drama. Also explores his comic spirit, the nature and range of his humor, decline and eventual causes for his decadence. Pt.2 concludes the study with an analysis of selected comic characters from various plays.

Böhne, Carl Georg. *Primitive Stage.* Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1971. Collection of comparative articles on ancient Greek and Sanskrit theatre. A unique and interesting approach.

Chandra, Moti. *The World of Courtesans.* Delhi: Vikas Pub. House, 1973. Contains a chapter devoted to the courtesans in Sanskrit drama.

Dikshit, Ratnamayidevi. *Women in Sanskrit Dramas.* Delhi: Mehar Chand Lachhman Das, 1964. A description, analysis and evaluation of women's characters and their position in Indian society from the pre-Kalidasa plays through modern Sanskrit plays.

Ghosh, Jathika. *Epic Sources of Sanskrit Literature.* Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1963. (Calcutta Sanskrit College Research Series No. 23, Studies no. 11) A major portion of the book deals with selected dramas in various historical periods.

Mankad, Dolarray Rangildas. *Ancient Indian Theatre.* Anand: Charotar Book Stall, 1960. (T. P. Trivedi Memorial Series 4) Revised and enlarged from an article appearing in *IHQ*, 1932. An interpretation of data concerning ancient playhouses.

________________. *The Types of Sanskrit Drama.* Karachi: Urmi Prakashan Mandir, 1936. Critical examination and interpretation of Sanskrit dramatic theory which influenced the evolution of different types of drama in ancient times.

Parikh, Jivanlal Trikamlal. *Sanskrit Comic Characters.* Surat: Popular Book Store, 1962. Not designed as a scholarly work, the author briefly explores the role of Vidusakas in major plays of ancient India.

Verma, K. M. *Natya, Nrtta and Nrtya: Their Meaning and Relation.* Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1957. Aims to reach the cultured reader, not the specialist, yet to the Western reader it is far from a simple text to understand. Emphasizes origins and historical development of the terms.

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Mayo, Donald Sherwood. "Indian Drama: Its Theory, Development and Practice in Relation to Hindu Philosophy." M. A. thesis, Univ. of Hawaii, 1952.

Ramdass, P. Raja. "A Study of the Theory of Acting in India." M. A. thesis, Univ. of Utah, 1960.

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Bakshi, Sri Ram. "The Role of Indian Classical Theatre in the Quest of New Theatre." *SRA*, 6 (1972), 168-172.

Balbir, Jagbans Kishore. "Sanskrit Drama and the Spectator," *Agra University Journal of Research; Letters*, 9 (July 1961), 19-25. Promises more information than it delivers, but is a rare excursion into this interesting subject.

Basu, Jogiraj. "Music, Dance and Drama in the Vedic Age," *Prabuddha Bharata*, 66 (May 1961), 223-227.

Bhat, G. K. "Dramatic Competition in Ancient India," *Pushpanjali*, V, 1 (1969), 151-154. Interesting findings by a noted authority. Reprinted in the *Journal of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda Oriental Institute* (Sept. 1970), 36-43.

______________. "Natya and Nrtya: An Aspect of Dramatic Representation," *JBBRAS* XXXIX, 40 (1964-65), 143-155. Attempts to estimate the importance of dance in Sanskrit dramatic performances of ancient times.

Choudhary, Radhakrishna. "Sanskrit Drama in Mithila: A Historical Study," *JBRS*, 43, pts. 1-2 (March-June 1957), 1-27. Important article dealing with infrequently discussed transitional period between the decline of Sanskrit drama and the rise of traditional theatre forms in various regions of India.

Deshpande, G. T. "Music in Sanskrit Drama," *Indian Antiquity*, ser. 3, I, 2 (1964), 69-76. Discusses a very important and often ignored topic.

Garde, Digambara Kasinatha. "The Vidusaka in Sanskrit Drama, with special reference to Kalidasa and His Predecessors," *BAUOS* (1932-33), 17-41. An early attempt to summarize and analyze the role of comic characters in ancient plays.

Jones, Clifford R. "Source Materials for the Construction of the *Natyamandapa* in the *Silparatna* and the *Tantrasamuccaya-Silpa-Bhagam*," *JAOS*, XCIII, 3 (July-Sept. 1973), 286-296.

Karmarkar, R. D. "The Dramatic Terms (A) *pravesaka* and *Viskambhaka* and (B) *Janantikam* and *apavaritam*," *ABORI*, 35 (1954), 122-128.

Keith, A. Berriedale. "The Caubhikas and the Indian Drama," *BSOAS*, 1 (1920), 27-32. Criticizes J. Luders for his attempt to vindicate the shadow play for its part in the development of Indian drama.

Kulkarni, V. M. "The Conception of Sandhis in the Sanskrit Drama," *JMSOI*, 5 (June 1956), 369-402.

Panchal, Goverdhan. "The Curtain in Classical Sanskrit Drama," *SN*, 25 (July-Sept. 1972), 23-38. Sensible assumptions, supported by fact.

Parikh, J. T. "The Orthodox Tradition About the Origin of the Sanskrit Drama," *JMSOI*, I, 4 (June 1952), 338-342.

Pisharoti, K. R. "The Ancient Indian Theatre," in *Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar Commemoration Volume*. Annamalainagar: Annamalai Univ., 1941, 338-349.

Raghavan, V. "Indian Classical Concept of Total Theatre," *SRA*, 5 (1964-65,1965-66), 88-92. A paper delivered for the East-West Theatre Seminar, New Delhi, 1966.

____________________. "Music in Ancient Indian Drama," *SN*, 4 (1956), 5-12. An extremely valuable article on a subject rarely discussed in contemporary books of dramaturgy. Reprinted from *JMA*, 35, pts. 1-4 (1954), 79-92. Originally published in *Arts and Letters* (London), 28, 1 (1954).

____________________. "On the Name 'One Act Nataka'," *PO*, 16 (1951), 86-90. Argues that *nataka* is not the correct term to use for describing one-act plays.

____________________. "Uparupakas and Nritya-Prabandhas," *Sn*, 2 (April 1966), 5-25. A scholarly discussion of the minor forms of theatre in ancient times which acted as a transition between classical Sanskrit drama and traditional forms of regional theatre.

Ramachandran, K. V. "Music and Dance in Kalidasa," *JORS* (1948-49; 1950-51), 116-135.

Reddy, D. V. S. "Medical Lore in Sanskrit Drama," *PO*, 9 (1944), 27-33. Refers to medicines, diseases, physical discomforts and physicians in Bhasa's plays.

Richmond, Farley. "Sanskrit Plays Abroad," *Times of India Annual, 1971*, 39-48. Traces the history of selected adaptations of Indian classical dramas in England, Europe, Russia, China and the U.S.A. Interesting photographs.

Saunders, Virginia. "Magic in the Sanskrit Drama," *JAOS*, 45 (1925), 110-114. Interesting selections taken from various dramas.

Subba Rao, D. "A Critical Survey of the Ancient Indian Theatre in Accordance with the *Bharata Natyasastra* and its Commentators," *JMSOI* (Oct. 1959), 188-208. A valuable interpretation of the physical theatre by a prominent Indian architect.

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Uresekar, H. S. "Music in Sanskrit Drama," *JBBRAS*, 41-42 (1966-67), 124-144. An important contribution to the understanding of significant, and often neglected, feature of ancient theatre.

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________. "Poetic Drama in England and India," *Literary Half-Yearly*, 2 (July 1961), 27-39. Comparison between dramatic techniques in the classical literature of both countries.

________. "Sanskrit Drama -- Epic and Romance," *SN*, 14 (Oct.-Dec. 1969), 24-29. Based on his book *Sanskrit Plays from Epic Sources*, the author explores both aspects, a treatment which has long been overdue.

Dramaturgical Texts and Summaries

Books

Appa Rao, P. S. R. *Bharata's Naatya Saastra: Indian Dramatology.* Trans. P. S. R. Appa Rao and P. Sri Rama Sastry. Hyderabad: Naatya Maalaa Pub., 1967. A brief analysis translated from Telugu of various subjects contained in the ancient text. Significant for its illustrations and charts. Poorly printed.

Bharata. *Natya Sastra.* Trans. Manomohan Ghosh. 2 vols. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1961. A standard text of the famous law book of Sanskrit dramaturgy with a good introduction.

________. *Tandava Laksanam, or the Fundamentals of Ancient Hindu Dancing.* Trans. Bijayeti Venkata Narayanaswami Naidu, Pusapuleti Srinivasulu Naidu and Ongale Venkata Rangayya Pantulu. Madras: G. S. Press, 1936. Chap. 4 of the *Natyasastra* with a glossary of technical dance terms compiled from chaps. 8-11 of the same work; illustrated by reproductions of sculptured dance poses.

Daumal, René. *Bharata: L'Origine du Theatre le Poesie et la Musique en Inde.* Paris: Gallimard, 1970. Short summaries of material drawn from the *Natyasastra.*

Dhananjaya. *The Dasarupa: A Treatise on Hindu Dramaturgy.* Trans. George C. O. Haas. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1912. (Columbia Univ. Indo-Iranian Series 7, ed. by A. V. Williams Jackson) Critical analysis and presentation of a tenth-century Sanskrit text which is more concise in laying down rules than is its famous predecessor, the *Natyasastra.* A standard work for the study of ancient theatre and drama.

Nandikesvara. *Abhinayadarpanam.* Trans. Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy and Gopala Kristnayya Duggirala as *The Mirror of Gesture, Being the Abhinaya Darpana of Nandikesvara.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1917. Trans. Manomohan Ghosh as *Abhinayadarpanam: A Manual of Gestures and Postures Used in Hindu Dance and Drama.* Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1957. Both significant editions with helpful illustrations of an extremely important ancient book of acting and dance gestures.

Rangacharya, Adya. *Introduction to Bharata's Natya-Sastra.* Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1966. Brief, simplified version of the ancient text of dramaturgy interpretating and interpolating material throughout. A good book for beginners.

Sagaranandin. *The Natakalaksanaratnakosa of Sagaranandin, a Thirteenth-Century Treatise on the Hindu Theater.* Trans. Myles Dillon, Murray Fowler and V. Raghavan. Philadelphia: Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 1960. A useful study of influences exerted by didactic texts on play construction in ancient times.

Trivedi, K. H. *The Natyadarpana of Ramacandra and Gunacandra: A Critical Study.* Ahmedabad: L. D. Institute of Indology, 1966. Significant medieval Jaina text of dramaturgy discussed in scholarly detail.

Varma, K. M. *Seven Words in Bharata: What Do They Signify?* Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1958. Offers solutions to textual problems in the *Natyasastra.*

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Kale, Pramod Keshav. "The *Natyasastra* of Bharata: A Selective Critical Exposition for the Western Theatre Scholar." Ph. D. diss. Univ. of Wisconsin, 1967. A new interpretation, excluding music, drama and dance, which sheds light on the production of classical plays in ancient times. Meant more for specialists of Asian theatre than for novices, however.

Lessley, Merrill Joe. "A Comparative Study of Oriental and Occidental Acting." Ph. D. diss. Univ. of Utah, 1969. Includes a study of Bharata's *Natyasastra.*

Esthetics

Books

De, Sushil Kumar. *Some Problems of Sanskrit Poetics.* Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1969. Various references to ancient critical works and the development of *rasa* in dramatic literature.

Dwivedi, R. I. *Principles of Literary Criticism in Sanskrit.* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1969. Papers of a seminar, some directly pertinent to the drama.

Gnoli, Raniero. *The Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinayagupta.* Rome: Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estreme Oriente, 1956. Contains the text and translation of Abhinavagupta's *Abhinavabharati*, an ancient commentary on Bharata's *Natyasastra.* A brilliant work enhanced by lucid introduction and appendices.

Jha, Bechan. *Concept of Poetic Blemishes in Sanskrit Poetics.* Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1965. (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series 47) Deals in depth with the *rasa* theory as it pertains to drama and other forms of literature.

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__________. *Santarasa and Abhinavagupta's Philosphy of Aesthetics.* Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1960.

Mishra, Hari Ram. *The Theory of Rasa in Sanskrit Drama, with a Comparative Study of General Dramatic Literature.* Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh: Vindhyachal Prakashan, 1964. An exhaustive detailed analysis, often more confusing than enlightening.

Mukherji, Ramaranjan. *Literary Criticism in Ancient India.* Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1966. Discusses the whole question of esthetics in Indian literature and in Chapter 4 discusses in detail the theory of *rasa.* Chaps. 5 and 6 concern *dhvani* (suggestion).

Nair, Krishnapillai Kripal. *Sanskrit Poetics: A Critical and Comparative Study.* London: Asia Pub. House, 1965. Discusses *rasa* as it relates to all areas of Indian literature.

Pattar, P. S. Subbarama. *Studies in Dhvanyaloka or the Reign of Rasa in Sanskrit Criticism.* Trichur: Mangalodayam Press, 1935. An unaccepted thesis submitted to the Univ. of Madras. Valuable for its explanation of *dhvani* (suggestion) as an inseparable partner of *rasa.*

Raghavan, V. *The Number of Rasas-s.* 2nd rev., enlarged ed. Madras: Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1967. A scholarly debate of the question, "Where there eight or nine rasas in classical Indian esethetic theory?"

Rakshagupta. *Psychological Studies in 'Rasa.'* Banaras: Banaras Hindu Univ. Press, 1950. An unusual approach to the subject.

Sharma, Mukunda Madhava. *The Dhvani Theory in Sanskrit Poetics.* Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1968. (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series 43) A scholarly examination of "suggestion" as an important element of *rasa.*

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Gramlath, Sucharita. "A Philosophical Investigation into the Nature and Role of Emotion in Drama with Reference to Classical Indian Aesthetics." Ph.D. diss., Univ. of London, 1969.

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Chakravarti, Amiya Kumar. "Dhvani Theory and Its Criticism," *CR*, CLXXIII, 1 (October 1964), 17-37.

Chaudhury, Pravas Jivan. "The Theory of Rasa," *JAAC*, XI, 2 (Dec. 1952), 147-150; rptd. 24 (Fall 1965), 145-149. A cursory summary of the key feature of Indian esthetics.

__________. "What Happens in the Theatre?" *JAAC*, 24 (Fall 1965), 187-190. Attempts to frame the esthetic experience in western terms to illustrate the Indian viewpoint.

Dace, Wallace. "The Concept of Rasa in Sanskrit Dramatic Theory," *ETJ*, 15 (1963), 249-254. A brief summary and interpretation.

Dange, Sadashiv A. "Suggestion in Sanskrit Dramas: (Bhasa and Kalidasa)," *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, XLIX, 4 (Jan. 1959), 238-251. A scholarly analysis of a key feature of *rasa.*

Dev, Amiya Kumbar. "Catharsis and Rasa." *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 14 (1966), 192-197. An interesting critical article.

Mukerjee, Radhakamal. "'Rasas' as Springs of Art in Indian Aesthetics," *JAAC*, XXIV, 1, pt. 1 (Fall 1965), 91-96. (Brief overview of *rasa* and its use in drama.)

Pandey, Kanti Chandra. "A Bird's-Eye View of Indian Aesthetics," *JAAC*, XXIV, pt. 1 (Fall 1965), 59-73.

Raghavan, V. "The Aesthetics of Ancient Indian Drama," *IL*, I, 2 (April-Sept. 1958), 67-74. (An excellent summary of a confusing subject.)

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Playwrights and Play Analyses

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Ayyar, A. S. Panchapakesa. *Bhasa.* Madras: V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu & Sons, 1957. (Indian Men of Letters Series). A good basic text on the playwright, each of his plays and their relationship to Indian society.

Bhat, G. K. *Bhasa Studies*. Kolhapur: Maharashtra Granth Bhandar, 1968. A collection of the author's papers formerly published elsewhere relating to the ancient playwright's dramatic content, form and staging.

Bhatta, Visvasa Gangadhara. ed. *Studies in the Sanskrit Drama*. Dharwar: Students Own Book Depot, 1927. A collection of play analyses by students edited by their professor.

Dange, Sadashiv A., and Sandhu S. Dange. *Critiques on Sanskrit Dramas*. Moradabad: Darshana Printers, 1963. A comparative and critical study of selected works on Sanskrit dramatists. Chiefly devoted to drama as literature.

Devadhar, C. R. *Plays Ascribed to Bhasa: Their Authenticity and Merits*. Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1927. Struggles with a controversial question. First published in *ABRI*.

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Harris, Mary B. *Kalidasa: Ein Versuch Zu Seiner Literarischen Wurdigung*. Breslau: Marcus, 1921. A scholarly study of the poet and playwright, his times and his work.

__________. *Kalidasa, Poet of Nature*. Boston: Meador Press, 1936. Short discussions of "Phenomenal Nature as Kalidasa Saw It" and "Kalidasa's Reaction to Phenomenal Nature." Originally based on a Ph.D. diss. at the Univ. of Chicago.

Hildebrandt, Alfred. *Kalidasa: Ein Versuch Zu Seiner Literarischen Wurdigung*. Breslau: Marcus, 1921. A scholarly study of the poet and playwright, his times and his work.

Jhala, G. C. *Kalidasa: A Study*. Bombay: Padma Pub., 1943. In addition to the man, the author studies the poet as a dramatist and his work, particularly *Shakuntala*, in terms of its improvement over the epic tale. Some comments on Kalidasa's concept of love.

Karmarkar, R. D. *Bhavabhuti*. Dharwar: Karnatak Univ. Press, 1963. (Extension Lectures Series 5) Guide for Indian students dealing with the playwright's life, analyses of selected dramas, and the contribution of the author to Sanskrit dramatic literature. Poorly printed.

Mansingha, Mayadhara. *Kalidasa and Shakespeare*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1959. Concerns topics such as the cross-cultural influences of one country on the other in the late eighteenth century. A major portion of the book compares the works in the poets as they typify the thought patterns of their respective cultures.

Mirashi, Vasudev Vishnu and Narayan Raghunath Navlekar. *Kalidasa: Date, Life and Work*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1969.

Pusalker, A. D. *Bhasa -- A Study*. 2nd rev. ed. Delhi: Munshiram Monoharlal, 1968. A scholarly attempt to arrive at a just conclusion to the controversy surrounding the authorship of the thirteen Trivandrum plays attributed to Bhasa. Also proposes a controversial contention that Kalidasa lived in the first century B. C. Discusses the sources and critically evaluates Bhasa's plays as literature after having compared two of them to plays on similar themes by Kalidasa. Includes interesting chapters on the period drawing on his article, "Critical Study of the Works of Bhasa," which appeared in the *JUB*, 2, pt. 4 (May 1934).

Raghavan, V. *Some Old Lost Rama Plays*. Annamalainagar: Annamalai Univ. Press, 1961. A collection of critical lectures on unpublished Sanskrit plays of the late classical period.

___________. *The Social Play in Sanskrit*. Bangalore: Indian Institute of World Culture, 1966. (Transaction no. 11) Resume of a lecture dealing with selected plays.

Ram, Sadhu. *Essays on Sanskrit Literature*. Delhi: Munshi Ram Manoharlal, 1965. Chapter 21 is devoted to Kalidasa and a comparison of his works with those of other famous playrights.

Ruben, Walter. *Kalidasa: The Human Meaning of His Works*. Trans. Joan Becker. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957. Contains information on how Kalidasa's works reached Germany, the life and time of the playwright, his poems, his three plays and his influence on Tagore.

Sabnis, S. A. *Kalidasa: His Style and His Times*. Bombay: N. M. Tripathi, 1966. A critical investigation of the plays and poems along with topical studies of such things as female psychology, flora, fauna, geography, furniture, etc.

Sastri, K. S. Ramaswami. *Kalidasa: His Period, Personality and Poetry*. Srirangam: Sri Vani Vilas Press, 1960. A sympathetic study of the author, his poems and plays. Useful, but not profound.

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Dev, Amiya Kumar. "*Shakuntala*, *Rama's Latter History*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Winter's Tale:* A Comparative Study in Tragicomic Structure." Ph. D. diss., Indiana Univ., 1967.

Gooding, Evelyn May. "A Director's Designs and Prompt Book of King Curaka's *The Little Clay Cart*." M. A. thesis, Univ. of Iowa, 1937.

Thomas, Paruvanani T. "Dramatic Form and the Use of Verse in *The Tempest* and *Sakuntalam:* A Comparative Study of the Notion of Drama Underlying Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Kalidasa's *Sakuntalam* as Representative Major Works from Two Different Dramatic Traditions and the Use of Them of Poetic Verse for Realizing Dramatic Form." Ph. D. diss., New York Univ., 1967.

Articles

Antarkar, W. R. "On the Sources of the Plot of the *Mudra-Raksasa,*" *JUB*, 38 (Oct. 1969), 19-25.

Artola, George T. "Harijivanamisra and His Short Sanskrit Plays," *SRA*, 4 (1962-63, 1963-64), 35-45. Analysis of six plays.

Barnett, L. D. "Abhasa-Bhasa," *BSOAS*, 3 (1923-25), 519-522. An attack on Keith's view of the Bhasa controversy.

Betai, Rameshchandra Sunderji. "Some Peculiarities of Sanskrit Drama and Their Results." *JUB*, 29,pt. 2 (Sept. 1960), 58-69. Explores similarities in the use of *rasa*, heroes and heroines, plot and dramatic technique in *Sakuntala*, *Uttararamacarita*, *Mrcchakatika*, and *Svapnavasavadatta*.

______________________________, "The Atmatattva in the *Sakuntalam* of Kalidasa." *JUB*, 24, pt. 2 (Sept. 1957), 152-158. Probes the deeper meaning of eternal love in a well-written analysis.

Bhat, G. K. *"Carudatta:* An Amrtanka Nataka?" *JUB*, 34, pt. 2 (Sept. 1965), 73-86. A distinguished scholar questions the contentions of C. R. Devadhar's edition of the play and examines it from a literary point of view. Reprinted in the author's *Bhasa Studies*.

___________. "The Repudiation of Sakuntala and Dushanta's Dilemma," *JMSOI*, 9 (Mar. 1960), 274-283.

Burrow, T. "The Dates of Syamilaka's *Padataditaka,*" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britian and Ireland* (1946), 46-53. Establishes the date of a play.

Byrski, M. Christopher. "Appreciation of Sanskrit Drama in Kaliyug," *SN*, 27 (Jan.-March 1973), 54-63. Fascinating approach to analysis from the standpoint of the critical tools of the age.

Dange, Sadashiv A. "Vipralambha in the *Uttararamacarita,*" *JUB*, 25 (Sept. 1956), 67-81.

Jackson, A. V. Williams. "Certain Dramatic Elements in Sanskrit Plays, with Parallels in the English Drama," *American Journal of Philology*, XIX, 85 (1898), 241-254. Discusses the play within a play, startling effects, intoxication as a humorous device and use of letters and missives as devices to complicate and unravel plot.

________. "Time Analysis of Sanskrit Plays," *JAOS*, 20 (1899), 341-359; and 21 (1900), 88-108. The first article in the series examines the use made by Kalidasa of this feature of plot and in the second article compares it with that made of it by Harsa.

Janaki, S. S. "The *Vikramorvasiya* of Kalidasa," *Sra*, 4 (1962-63, 1963-64), 12-43. A study of the sources used for this unusual drama.

Jhala, G. C. "Bhavabhuti and His Contemporary Detractors," *JMSOI*, 14 (Mar.-June 1965), 448-463.

Krishnamoorthy, K. "A New Play by Asvaghosa?" *JMSOI*, 11 (June 1962), 428-432.

Kulshreshtra, R. B. "*Svapnavasavadatta* -- A Study in the Subconscious," *Vishveshvaranand Indological Journal*, 5 (1967), 63-70.

Lesny, V. "The Stage of Development of the Prakrit of Bhasa's Dramas and His Age," trans. by S. N. Ghosal. *JMSOI*, XIII, 1 (1963), 48-53.

Masson, J. "A Note on the Sources of Bhasa's (?) Avimaraka," *JMSOI*, XIX, 1-2 (Sept.-Dec. 1969), 60-74. A scholarly investigation of the play's sources.

Mirashi, V. V. "Bhavabhuti and Umbeka," *IHQ*, 34 (Mar. 1958), 29-39.

Nandi, Tapasvi S. "The Elements of Setting and Costumes in the Plays of Kalidasa," *JMSOI*, 13 (Dec. 1963), 134-140. Applies his knowledge of modern stagecraft to the plays.

Pisharoti, A. Krishna and K. Rama Pisharoti. "Bhasa's Works -- Are They Genuine?" *BSOAS*, 3 (1925-25), 107-117. Disapprove of assigning all thirteen Trivandrum plays to the authorship of Bhasa, on historical grounds.

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________. "Bhasa," *SRA*, 4 (1964-65, 1965-66), 99-103. An abridged radio talk on the famous, ancient Sanskrit playwright.

________. "Kalidasa, Sanskrit Drama and Indian Theatre," *SRA*, 5 (1964-65, 1965-66), 93-98. An interesting summary by one of India's leading authorities.

________. "Love in the Plays of Kalidasa," *Orient Review and Literary Digest*, 2 (Mar.-April 1956), 99-118.

________. "The *Sahrdayananda* of Harijivanamisra," *SRA*, 4 (1962-63, 1963-64), 45-49. Critical analysis of a Sanskrit play.

__________. "Two More Old Farces: The *Kuhanabhaiksava* and the *Somavalliyogananda,*" *SRA,* 4 (1964-65, 1966-67), 55-68. Scholarly examination of obscure plays.

Rao, V. Venkatakrishna. "Bhasa's Rama-dramas," *PO,* 15 (1950), 112-119. Discusses the inconsistencies of two of Bhasa's plays in relation to the *Ramayana,* their source.

Sandesara, B. J. "The *Sankhaparabhava Vyayoga:* A Historical Sanskrit Play by Harihara (13th Century A. D.)," *JMSOI,* 7 (June 1958), 270-275.

Sastri, T. Ganapati. "The Works of Bhasa," *BSOAS,* 3 (1923-25), 627-637. Supports his argument that all thirteen Trivandrum plays were penned by Bhasa and attacks his critics, using *The Vision of Vasavadatta* as an example.

Sohoni, S. V. "Kalidasa's Use of *bhana* Technique." *JBRS,* 54 (1968), 146-157.

Subba Rao, B. "Age of Kalidasa: A Study of the Social Conditions Based on *Malavikagnimitra,*" *JMSOI,* I, 1 (Sept. 1951), 65-71; I, 2 (Dec. 1951), 151-159; and I, 4 (June 1952), 346-352.

Subrahmanian, A. C. "The *Winter's Tale* and the *Sakuntala:* A Comparative Study," *SRA,* 5 (1964-65; 1966-67), 69-76. Interesting but brief.

Sukthankar, V. S. "Studies in Bhasa," *JOAS,* 40 (1920), 248-259; 41 (1921), 107-130; and 42 (1922), 59-74. Explores the controversy concerning the authorship of the thirteen plays attributed to Bhasa in three learned articles.

______________. "The Bhasa Riddle: A Proposed Solution," *JBBRAS,* I, 1 (1925), 126-143. A very finely argued case.

Trivedi, K. H. "Samavakara, A Particular Type of Sanskrit Drama," *JMSOI,* XV, 2 (1965), 197-202. Interesting discussion of an unusual topic.

Usha. "Twentieth Century Sanskrit Dramas -- Trends and Tendencies." *Bharatiya Vidya,* 27 (1967), 49-54.

Venkataraghavachariar, V. S. "The Hasya Cudamani of Vatsaraja," *SRA,* 1 (1958-59), 35-41. The comic sentiment used in an ancient Sanskrit play.

Viadya, P. L. "On the Use of Prakrit Dialects in Sanskrit Drama," *ABORI,* 33, pts. 1-4 (1952), 15-25.

Viswanathan, K. "Kalidasa's *Abhijnanashakuntalam*," *Aryan Path*, 31, pt. 1 (May 1960), 200-206; pt. 2 (June 1960), 243-248; pt. 3 (July 1960), 290-298. An excellent critical review of the play, with particular reference to character, language and plot.

Play Collections and Plays

Anderson, George Lincoln. ed. *The Genius of the Oriental Theater*. New York: New American Library, 1966. Contains Monier Williams 1867 edition of *Shakuntala and the Ring of Recognition* and Arthur William Ryder's 1905 edition of *The Little Clay Cart (Mrcchakatika)*, plus several Japanese plays.

Baudhayana. "Bhagavad-ajjukiyas " (The Hermit and the Harlot). In *Mahfil (Journal of South Asian Literature)*, VIII, 3-4 (Fall-Winter 1971), 149-166, trans. J. A. B. van Buitenen; also in *Three Sanskrit Lighter Delights*, trans. C. C. Mehta as "The Priest and the Prostitute."

Bhasa. *Svapnavasavadattam*. In *Great Sanskrit Plays*, ed. and trans. P. Lal; in *Vasavadatta*, trans. V. S. Sakthankar; in *Thirteen Trivandrum Plays Attributed to Bhasa*, trans. A. C. Woolner and Lakshman Sarup and rptd. in *Six Sanskrit Plays*, ed. H. W. Wells, in *Four Classical Asian Plays*, trans. Niranjan Bhagat.

_____. *The Madhyama Vyavoga: A Drama Composed by the Poet Bhasa*. Trans. A. C. Woolner and Lakshman Sarup. 2 vols. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1930-31. Contains all the plays discovered in the twenties attributed to Bhasa. Literal translations not meant to be performed.

_____. *Three Plays of Bhasa*. Trans. Amiyo Rao and B. G. Rao. New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1971. Contains *Pratimanataka*, *Karnabhara* and *Pancharatra*.

_____. *Vasavadatta*. Trans. V. S. Sathankar. Bombay: Oxford Univ. Press, 1923.

Bhatta Narayana. *Veni-Sankara-Nataka, or The Binding of the Braid*. Trans. Saurindramohan Tagore. Calcutta: n.p., 1880. A Sanskrit drama in six acts taken from a story in the *Mahabharata*.

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__________. *Rama's Later History or Uttara Ramacharita*. Trans. Shripad Krishna Belvalkar. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1915. (Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 21)

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Brandon, James R. ed. *Traditional Asian Plays.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1972. Contains *The Toy Cart,* transcreated by P. Lal with a brief introduction by the editor.

Buitenen, Johannes Adrianus Bernadus van. trans. *Two Plays of Ancient India: The Little Clay Cart and The Minister's Seal.* New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1968. Actable translations accompanied by a comprehensive introduction.

Dignaga. *Kandamala, or The Jasmine Garland.* Trans. A. C. Woolner. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1935. (Punjab University Oriental Publications, 27)

Ghose, Aurobindo. *Collected Poems and Plays.* 2 vols. Pondichery: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1942. Vol. 1 contains *Perseus, The Deliverer* and Vol. 2 contains a translation of Kalidasa's *Vikramorvasie, or the Hero and the Nymph* reprinted in a third edition by the Ashram in 1952.

Harsa. *The Dramas of Shri Harsha.* Trans. Bela Bose. Allahabad: Ketabistan, 1948. Contains *Ratnavali (A Necklace of Pearls), Priyadarshika (The Good-Looking)* and *Nagananda (The Delight of Serpents),* preceeded by a short introduction.

Harsa. *Nagananda.* In *The Dramas of Shri Harsha,* trans. Bela Bose; trans. Palmer Boyd in *Six Sanskrit Plays,* ed. H. W. Wells; in *Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus,* trans. H. H. Wilson.

_____. *Ratnavali.* In *The Dramas of Shri Harsha,* trans. Bela Bose; in *Great Sanskrit Plays,* trans. P. Lal; in *Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus,* trans. H. H. Wilson.

Irwin, Vera R. ed. *Four Classical Asian Plays.* Baltimore: Penguin Books. 1972. Contains Niranjan Bhagat's translation of *The Vision of Vasavadatta* with introductory essay by H. W. Wells and production comments by Mrinalini Sarabhai.

Kalidasa. *Abhijnana Sakuntalam.* In *Sakuntala,* trans. Laurence Binyon, Kedarnath Dasgupta; trans. A. Hjalmar Egren in *Six Sanskrit Plays,* ed. H. W. Wells; In Kalidasa's *Abhijnana-Sakuntala,* trans. M. B. Emeneau; In *Shakuntala or the Fatal Ring,* trans. P. Lal; in *Sakoontala; or, The Lost Ring,* trans. Monier Monier-Williams; in *Sakuntala and Other Writings,* trans. Arthur W. Ryder and rptd. in *The Genius of the Oriental Theater,* ed. G. L. Anderson.

_________. *Kalidasa's Abhijnana-Sakuntala.* Trans. M. B. Emeneau. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1962. According to the author, he attempts a judicious combination of colloquial and not so colloquial levels of English (with an American flavor) based on the Bengali recension.

________. "Malcvika and Afnimitra." In Mahfil, (*Journal of South Asian Literature)* VII, 3-4 (Fall-Winter 1971), 67-127, trans. Edwin Gerow.

________. *Sakoontala; or, The Lost Ring.* Trans. Monier Monier-Williams. London: George Routledge & Sons, 1895. Long one of the standard translations by an eminent scholar. First published in 1855 and now the language is woefully out of date.

Kalidasa. *Sakuntala by Kalidasa.* Trans. and adapted Laurence Binyon and Kedarnath Dasgupta. London: Macmillian and Co., 1920.

________. *Shakuntala and Other Writings.* Trans. Arthur W. Ryder. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1912. Contains a useful introduction, a translation of *Shakuntala*, and summaries of *Malavika and Agnimitra, Urvashi*, plus selected poetry.

________. *Shakuntala or The Fatal Ring: An Indian Drama by Kalidasa.* Trans. Sir William Hones. Calcutta: Society for the Rescuscitation of Indian Literature, 1901. Reprinted from the original translation of 1789.

________. *Vikramorvasi.* Trans. Ananda Acharya. London: Francis Griffiths, 1914.

________. *Vikramorvasiya.* In *Vikramorvasi*, trans. Ananda Acharya; in *Collected Poems and Plays*, trans. Aurobindo Ghose and rptd. in *Six Sanskrit Plays*, ed. H. W. Wells; In *Sanskrit Plays from Epic Sources*, rendered into English by H. W. Wells; in *Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus*, trans. H. H. Wilson.

Lal, P. ed. and trans. *Great Sanskrit Plays, in New English Transcreations.* New York: New Directions, 1964. Contains Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*, Shukraka's *The Toy Cart*, Vishakadatta's *The Signet Ring of Rakshasa*, Bhasa's *The Dream of Vasavadatta*, Bhavabuti's *The Latter Story of Rama* and Harsha's *Ratnavali.* Abridged and colloquial at times distorting the original form and meaning of the plays.

Mahendra-Varman. *The Farce of the Drunk Monk.* Trans. P. Lal. Calcutta; Writers Workshop, 1968. A delightfully stageworthy adaptation.

Mahendravikrama-Varman. *Matta-Vilasa.* In *The Farce of the Drunk Monk*, trans. P. Lal; in "Matta-Vilasa: A Farce," trans. L. D. Barnett in *Three Sanskrit Lighter Delights*, trans. C. C. Mehta.

____________________. "Matta-Vilasa: A Farce." Trans. L. D. Barnett. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, 5 (1930), 697-717. A scholarly rendering of the humorous text.

MAHFIL *(Journal of South Asian Literature)*, VII, 3-4 (Fall-Winter 1971). Contains the following -- "Malavika and Agnimitra," "The Hermit and the Harlot."

Mehta, C. C. trans. *Three Sanskrit Lighter Delights.* Baroda: M. S. Univ. of Baroda Press, 1969. Besides delightful introductions contains what seem at times awkward but very lively translations of *The Priest and the Prostitute, The Sport of the Intoxicated* and *Two Lover's in Search of Each Other.* The first two plays are by Mahendravarman. The last is by Vararuchi.

Satyavrat, Usha. *Sanskrit Dramas of the Twentieth Century.* New Delhi: Meharchand Lachmandas, 1971. Contains summaries of modern Sanskrit plays, categorized as biographical, historical, humorous, mythological, and legendary, political, social and miscellaneous.

Sudraka. *The Little Clay Cart.* Trans. Satyendra Kumar Basu. Calcutta; Calcutta Univ. Press, 1939.

______. *The Little Clay Cart: A Hindu Drama Attributed to King Shudraka.* Trans. Arthur William Ryder and adapted for the occidental stage by Agnes Morgan. New York: Theatre Arts, 1934. An abbreviated version used for a Neighborhood Playhouse production. In part based on the stagemanager's book.

______. *The Little Clay Cart (Mrcchakatika); A Hindu Drama Attributed to King Shudraka.* Trans. and ed. Arthur William Ryder. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1905.

______. *Mrcchakatika.* In *The Little Clay Cart,* trans. Satyendra Kumar Basu; in *Traditional Asian Plays,* transcreated by P. Lal and ed. James Brandon; in *Two Plays of Ancient India,* trans. J. A. B. van Buitenen; in *Great Sanskrit Plays,* trans. P. Lal; in *The Genius of the Oriental Theater,* trans. Monier Williams and ed. G. L. Anderson; in *Mrcchakatika, The Little Clay Cart,* trans. Arthur W. Ryder, and in part rptd. in *The Little Clay Cart,* adapted by Agnes Morgan; in *The Toy Cart,* trans. Arthur Symons; in *Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus,* trans. H. H. Wilson.

______. *Mrcchakatika, The Little Clay Cart: A Drama in Ten Acts Attributed to King Sudraka.* Trans. Revilo Pendleton Oliver. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1938. (Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, vol. 23, nos. 1-2) Besides rendering the play into actable English the translator has provided copious notes and appendices that widen the perspective of the reader.

______. *The Toy Cart.* Trans. Arthur Symons. Dublin: Maunsel & Co., 1919.

Vishakadatta. *Mudrarakashasa.* In *Great Sanskrit Plays,* trans. P. Lal; in *Two Plays of Ancient India,* trans. J. H. B. van Buitenen; in *Select Speciments of the Theatre of the Hindus,* trans. H. H. Wilson.

Wells, Henry W. *Sanskrit Plays from Epic Sources*. Baroda: M. S. Univ. of Baroda Press, 1968. Contains the following works of Bhassa: *The Five Nights, Potsherd as Envoy, The Embassy, Karna's Task* and *The Broken Thighs*. And also Kalidasa's *Vikramorvasiyam* and Bhavabhuti's *Rama's Later History*.

_____________. Wells, Henry W. ed. *Six Sanskrit Plays*. New York: Asia Pub. House, 1964. Besides providing a good introduction contains Bhasa's *The Vision of Vasavadatta*, Sudraka's *The Little Clay Cart*, Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* and *Vikramorvacia*, Bhavabhuti's *Rama's Later History* and Harsa's *Nagananda*.

Wilson Horace Hayman. *Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus*. 2 vols. London: Parbury, Allen and Co., 1835. One of the earliest collections of play translation Vol. 1 contains introductory material reprinted in *Theatre of the Hindus*, 1955. Also includes dated translations of *Mrichchakati, or the Toy Cart, Vikrama and Urvasi, or the Hero and the Nymph, Uttara Rama Cheritra, or Continuation of the History of Rama*. Vol. 2 contains *Malati Madhava, or the Stolen Marriage, Mudra Rakshasa, or the Signet of the Minister* and *Retnavali, or the Necklace*. The author provides a useful appendix of stories of different dramas, the accounts of which are not readily available in other sources.

TRADITIONAL DRAMA AND THEATRE

General and Miscellaneous Texts

Books

Gargi, Balwant. *Folk Theater of India*. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1966. A standard work on selected forms, the text is written in a lively, if at times somewhat confusing, style. Caution is advised on much of the factural information presented. Excellently illustrated.

Hein, Norvin. *The Miracle Plays of Mathura*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1972. An excellent, scholarly account of the history and characteristics of various forms of religious drama in this region of North India, including especially Ramlila and Raslila.

Mathur, Jagdish Chandra. *Drama in Rural India*. New York: Asia Pub. House, 1964. A good, standard text of various traditional theatre forms. Detailed discussion of place and preparation for performance, stories, themes and social purpose, acting and esthetic pleasure, music and dance and concludes with a brief summary of puppet drama.

Raghavan, M. D. *Folk Plays and Dances of Kerala*. Trichur: Rama Varma Archaeological Society, 1947. An excellent discussion of the many ritualistic dances and dance-dramas of this southern state.

St. Ann's Training College. *The Cultural Heritage of the Tuluvas and Places of Interest in South Kanara.* Mangalore: Dept. of Extension Services, St. Ann's Training College, 1963. A small booklet containing valuable descriptive material on various ritual dances and dance-dramas of the tribals.

Articles and Periodicals

Awasthi, Suresh. "Indian Folk Theatre: Forms and Conventions," *Pushpanjali*, V, 1 (1969), 147-149. A valuable summary by the secretary of the national academy of theatre research.

Byrski, M. Christopher. "Theatre and Sacrifice: *Natya* and *Yajna*," *Prajna*, IX, 1 (Oct. 1963), 63-70. Traces the relations between ritual and theatre in traditional India.

Dhamija, Ram. "Masks in India," *TIA, 1937*, 73-80. Brief article illustrated with many fascinating pictures of masks used in dance and dance-dramas in various parts of the country.

Gandhi, Shanta. "Experiments in Folk Krama for Contemporary Theatre," *SN*, 9 (Jan.-March 1969), 52-68. A fascinating account of the struggles and successes of students of the National School of Drama, New Delhi, to adapt theatre forms and stories of other regions of the country into Hindi. Written by a teacher and supervisor of the project.

Goswami, Praphulladatta. "Folk Drama in Assam," *Folk-lore* (May 1960), 148-150. Cursory account of selected forms.

M, XXI, 3 (June 1968). Entire edition devoted to shadow, string, rod and glove puppets from various regions of India. Perhaps the most comprehensive collection of materials yet available on this subject.

N, Folk Theatre Number, VI, 4 (1962). A collection of articles accompanied by interesting illustrations on theatre forms in various regions. One of the few basic sources on the subject. Many of the articles are poorly written, however.

Razdan, Inder. "Traditional Theatre Crafts of India," *N*, X, 1 (1967), 28-33. The best articles of its kind available. Reprinted in the *BITC*, 1967, 365-375.

Richmond, Farley. "Selected Crafts of Traditional Indian Theatre," *Times of India Annual*, 1972, 29-36. Well-illustrated survey.

________________. "Some Religious Aspects of Indian Traditional Theatre," *TDR*, XV, 3 (Spring 1971), 122-131. Emphasis on the rituals of selected forms of theatre.

Sitaram, K. N. "Dramatic Representations in South India, with Special Reference to Travancore and Tinnevelly District," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 54 (1924), 22-137.

Specialized Studies

Books

Iyer, K. Bharatha. *Kathakali: The Sacred Dance-Drama of Malabar.* London: Luzac, 1955. Deals with historical development, production, performance techniques and touches on music and dramatic literature. Until recently, the most thorough and reliable text on the subject.

Jones, Clifford R. and Betty True Jones. *Kathakali: An Introduction to the Dance-Drama of Kerala.* San Francisco: American Society of Eastern Arts, 1970. An introductory text for western readers, although somewhat overly detailed in parts. Perhaps the best book of its kind. Brilliant illustrations which at times overpower the text.

Kakati, B. ed. *Aspects of Early Assamese Literature.* Gauhati: Gauhati Univ. Dept. of Pub. 1953. A good summary of the origins of Assamese indigenous drama, its similarities to and differences from classical Sanskrit drama and a brief discussion of major and minor dramatists and the production of plays. Packed into less than forty pages.

Mansingh, Mayadhar. *History of Oriya Literature.* New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1962. Discusses the indigenous drama in relation to classical Sanskrit drama and briefly mentions various forms of theatre peculiar to Orissa.

Neog, Maheswar. *Sankaradeva.* New Delhi: National Book Trust of India, 1967. An outstanding scholarly work dealing with the admirable Assamese saint, poet, playwright and social worker. Much valuable information on his contribution to theatre through his creation, the Ankiya Nat.

______________. *Sankaradeva and His Times: Early History of the Vaisnava Faith and Movement in Assam.* Gauhati: Gauhati Univ. Dept. of Pub., 1965. By far the most authoritative book on the subject, with detailed discussion of Ankiya Nat. Even more useful than his later study published in 1967.

Pandeya, Avinash C. *The Art of Kathakali.* Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1961. A general summary valuable for its photographs and brevity. Rather poorly written, however.

Poduval, Vasudeva. *Diagrams of Hand Poses in Kathakali.* Trivandrum: Govt. Press, 1930. A short but useful guide, particularly to the layman.

Raja, K. Kunjunni. *Kutiyattam: An Introduction.* New Delhi: Sangeet Natak Akademi, 1964. Valuable for its revelations of Sanskrit theatre as traditionally practiced for centuries in Kerala by caste-Hindus. Reprinted from *Samskrita Ranga Annual*, 2 (1959-1960), 17-52.

Tampy, K. P. Padmanabhan. *Kathakali: An Indigenous Art-Form of Kerala.* Calcutta: Indian Pub. 1963. A short, simple description of the famous form of dance-drama in Kerala. Unimpressively illustrated.

Tilákasiri, J. *The Puppet Theatre of Asia*. Ceylon: Dept. of Cultural Affairs (1968). Includes short descriptive surveys of puppetry in India and Ceylon, as well as Indo-China, Indonesia and Japan. Excludes China.

Theses, Dissertations

Abrams, Tevia. "Tamasha: People's Theatre of Maharashtra State, India." Ph. D. diss., Michigan State Univ., 1974. A lively account of its general characteristics enriched by scripts and scenarios and generously illustrated.

Ashton, Martha Bush. "Yakshagana Badagatittu Bayalata: A South Indian Dance Drama." Ph. D. diss., Michigan State Univ., 1972. A comprehensive, descriptive study of a well known form of traditional theatre in the northern portion of South Kanara. Interestingly illustrated.

Blank, Judith. "The History, Cultural Context, and Religious Meaning of the Chou Dance, Theater of the Ex-state of Mayurbhanj, Orissa." Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Chicago, 1972.

Hatch, Emily. "Kathakali: The Indigenous Drama of Malabar." Ph. D. diss., Cornell Univ., 1934.

Hein, Norvin J. "The Vaishnava Dramatic Traditions of Mathura and Vrindavan." Ph. D. diss., Yale Univ., 1951. Extremely useful study in detail of Ramlila, Raslila and Krishnalila of Mathura and Vrindavan.

Jones, Clifford R. "The Temple Theatre of Kerala: Its History and Description." Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1967. A valuable and enlightening pioneer study of the physical characteristics of theatres used in the presentation of Kutiyattam, perhaps the oldest continuous dramatic tradition preserved in India.

Kinsley, David R. "The Divine Player: A Study of Krsnalila." Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Chicago, 1970.

Swann, Darius L. "Three Forms of Traditional Theatre of Uttar Pradesh, North India." Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Hawaii, 1974.

Articles and Periodicals

Ashton, Martha Bush. "Yakshagana: A South Indian Folk Theatre," *TDR*, XIII, 3 (Spring 1969), 143-155. A brief descriptive overview. Illustrated with interesting photographs.

Awashti, Suresh. "The Ramayana Theatre Tradition in India and Southeast Asia," *QJNCPA*, I, 1 (Sept. 1972), 47-60.

Barba, Eugenio. "The Kathakali Theatre," *TDR*, XI, 4 (Summer 1967), 37-50. A fascinating descriptive summary.

Bhattacharyya, Asutosh. "Yatra of Bengal," *SN*, 12 (April-June 1969), 29-39. A rather poorly written, short historical account, with interesting observations about current trends.

Byrski, M. Christopher. "Is Kudiyattam a Museumpiece?" *SN*, 5 (July-Sept. 1967), 45-54. Plea for the revival of Sanskrit theatre and regional-language theatre along the lines of Kutiyattam, an ancient form of theatre in Kerala State.

______________________. "Teatr Najantyczniejszy." *Nadbitkaz Pamietnika Teatralmego*, Rok 1969, Zeszyt 1-2 (69-70). (Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk.) An illustrated monograph of 47 pages based on the author's intimate knowledge of Kutiyattam of Kerala.

Chaitanya, Krishna. "The Aesthetics of Kathakali," *SN*, 15 (Jan.-March 1970), 5-10. A welcome addition to the literature. One of the few authors ever to deal with the esthetics of a major traditional theatre form.

"Costumes and Accessories in Kathakali," in *Census of India: 1961*, 8A, 26-74. An extremely comprehensive survey of the subject. The best available to date.

Gargi, Balwant. "Ramlila in Ramnagar," *SN*, 13 (July-Sept. 1969) 27-34. A colorful, journalistic account of the famous form of North Indian ritual theatre as observed by a noted observer in the field.

Hein, Norvin. "The Ram Lila," in *Traditional India; Structure and Change.* Ed. Milton Singer. Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1959. A detailed scholarly summary of a thesis study shedding much light on a fascinating form of North Indian ritual theatre.

"An Interview with Dadu Indurika," *QJNCPA*, II, 4 (Dec. 1973), 21-40. Revealing discussion of performance procedures with a leading Tamasha actor.

Iyer, E. Krishna. "Bhagavata Mela -- Dance-Drama of Bharata Natya," *SN*, 13 (July-Sept. 1969), 46-56. A sympathetic historical and critical appraisal by a well-known dance critic.

_________________. "Classical Bhagavata Mela Dance Drama," *M*, XIX, 2 (March 1966), 4-12. A historical-critical summary of a ritual theatre form of Madras State.

_________________. "Therukoothu or Street Play," *M*, XIX, 2 (March 1966), 13-16. A short summary of a relatively obscure but fascinating form of theatre in Madras State.

Iyer, K. Bharatha. "Krishnattam," *TIA, 1966*, 71-80. A well-written summary of the history and characteristics of a form of ritualistic dance-drama performed in only one temple of Kerala State.

_______________. "Kutiyattam (The Sanskrit Drama of Kerala)," *TIA, 1962*, 19-26. A colorful and interestingly written summary of India's oldest form of traditional theatre.

Joga Rao, S. V. "The Tradition of the Puppet Theatre, With Special Reference to Andhra," *T*, 31 (Dec. 1963), 20-25.

Jones, Clifford R. "Bhagavata Mela Natakam: A Traditional Dance-Drama Form," *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXII, 2 (Feb. 1963), 193-200. A sound, scholarly appraisal of a dying form of traditional theatre in Madras State.

Kambar, Chandrashekhar. "Ritual in Kannada Folk Theatre," *SN*, 25 (July-Sept. . 1972), 5-22. Very interesting and useful article.

Karanth, K. S. "Yakshagana," *M*, XLX, 2 (Mar. 1966), 17-29. A short summary of the history and characteristics of a famous form of theatre in South Kanara. Written and illustrated by the author of a Kannada-language book on the subject.

Khanolkar, C. T. "The Dashavatara Tradition of the Konkan," *QJNCPA*, III, 1 (Mar. 1974), 12-33. An important and rarely discussed form of theatre concerned with Vishun's reincarnations.

Mathur, J. C. "Inside a Temple Theatre -- A Personal Account of Kootiyattam." *SN*, 26 (Oct.-Dec. 1972), 20-32.

Medhi, Kaliram. "Origin of the Assamese Drama," in *Aspects of Early Assamese Literature*. Ed. Banikanta Kakati. Gauhati: Gauhati Univ. Dept. of Pub., 1953. An excellent review of the early theatre and its connection with classical Sanskrit drama and theatre.

Menon, Devaki. "The 'Kuttu' of the Kerala Theatre," *JMA*, (Madras), 25, Pts. 1-4 (1954), 122-129. Delightfully written description and account of noteworthy incidents of this unique form of one-man acting.

Misra, Susheela. "Kabuki and Kathakali -- Some Impressions," *SN*, 14 (Oct. -Dec. 1969), 40-49. A fascinating idea which suffers because the author was unaware of the variety of Kabuki plays.

Nadkarni, Dnyaneshwar. "Marathi Tamasha -- Yesterday and Today," *SN*, 12 (April-June 1969), 19-28. One of the few articles in English on this lusty form of theatre. Good illustrations help the reader to visualize the blend of erotic and humorous sentiments which typify Tamasha. Interesting description of selected new plays written in imitation of the form.

Nair, V. Madhavan. "Innovations in Kathakali," *SN*, 2 (April 1966), 86-91. Discusses the new stories rendered into the famous form of traditional dance-drama.

______________. "Towards a Better Appreciation of Kathakali," *SN*, 24 (April-June 1972), 57-60.

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Films, Recordings, and Slides

God with a Green Face. American Society for Eastern Arts, San Francisco, CA. Color, 25 min. Although clever photography obscures the basic story depicted in gestures, this is the best film on Kathakali available for rental or purchase.

Kathakali. Information Service of India, Washington, D. C. Color, 22 min. A good general survey, unfortunately made in the studio rather than location in Kerala.

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"The Music of India: II." Baren Reiter Musicaphon #BM 30 L2007, a UNESCO Collection Recording. Contains a prelude and scene from Kathakali.

"The Music of Kathakali." American Society for Eastern Arts, San Francisco, CA. Features musicians and singers of the Kerala Kalamandalam, with informative jackey notes.

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"Wondrous Music of India (South.)" Request Records # SRLP 8076. Contains a selection of Krishna Lila from Kathakali, performed by the South Indian Darpana Company of Dancers and Musicians under the guidance of Mrinalini Sarabhi, the famous dancer.

Play Collections

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REGIONAL-LANGUAGE DRAMA AND THEATRE

General Texts and Specialized Studies

Books

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Cousins, James H. *The Plays of Brahma: An Essay on the Drama in National Revival.* Bangalore: Amateur Dramatic Ass. 1921. An early, enlightened plea for the revival of drama along indigenous lines, with influences proposed from selected theatres of Europe and Japan.

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Iyengar, K. R. Srinivasa, ed. *Drama in Modern India and the Writer's Responsibility in a Rapidly Changing World.* Bombay: P.E.N. All-India Centre, 1961.

Jindal, K. B. *A History of Hindi Literature.* Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1955. Chap. 9 deals with drama from 1800 to the present. Contains some useful information.

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Nadkarni, Dnyaneshwar. *New Directions in the Marathi Theatre.* New Delhi: Maharashtra Information Centre, 1967. Emphasis on developments from 1940's through the date of publication. Part of a series including Kale's *Theatre In Maharashtra* and Naik's *Origin of the Marathi Theatre.*

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Bhalla, Madan Mohan. "In Search of Indian Theatre," *Diogenes*, 45 (Spring 1964), 37-48. Discusses the state of Indian theatre in 1964 and suggests means for improving it.

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Biswas, A. R. "Shakespeare and the Indian Theatre and Drama," *CR*, CLXXV, 3 (June 1965), 195-239. An extremely important discussion of the influences of Shakespeare on Indian theatre, especially on that in Bengal.

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Bengali Drama, Theatre and Rabindranath Tagore

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Films and Recordings

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NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

MARTHA ASHTON - Completed her Ph.D. research in Theatre at Michigan State University in 1972. Currently conducting research in South Kanara, Mysore State, India.

SAMBHU BAG - Information not availabe.

SRI RAM V. BAKSHI - Associate Professor of Theatre, State University of New York, Brockport. Author of several articles on Indian Theatre and Drama.

CARLO COPPOLA - Teaches Hindi and Urdu language and Indian literature; his dissertation from the University of Chicago dealt with the Progressive Movement in Urdu poetry; he is an editor of the *Journal of South Asian Literature*.

V. SUBRAMANYA IYER - Retired head-master of a school in Kerala and connoisseur and patron of Kathakali dance-drama.

L. S. RAJAGOPALAN - Co-owner of the Cochin Pharmacal Co., Trichur, Kerala. Noted particularly for his articles on the music and musical instruments of Kerala.

EDWINA RANGANATHAN - Author of several articles on the dance-dramas of Tamil Nadu and a book on Chinese Theatre.

FARLEY RICHMOND - Associate Professor of Theatre and Director of Asian Theatre Programs, Michigan State University. Chairman of the Asian Theatre Program, American Theatre Association.

ADITI NATH SARKAR - Ph.D. Student in South Asian Studies, University of Chicago.

PABITRA SARKAR - Assistant Professor of Linguistics and South Asian Language at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Sarkar has been intimately connected with the Amateur Theatre in Calcutta.

NEILS ROED SORENSEN - Danish Theatre scholar and author of numerous articles on the theatre and drama in rural India.

DARIUS SWANN - Assistant Professor of Religion, George Mason University. Author of several articles on Indian Theatre and Drama. Dr. Swann has had more than a decade of field experience in India.

ASAITA THAKAR - Information not available.

UNNAYI VARYYAR - Information not available.